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THE NEW YORKER

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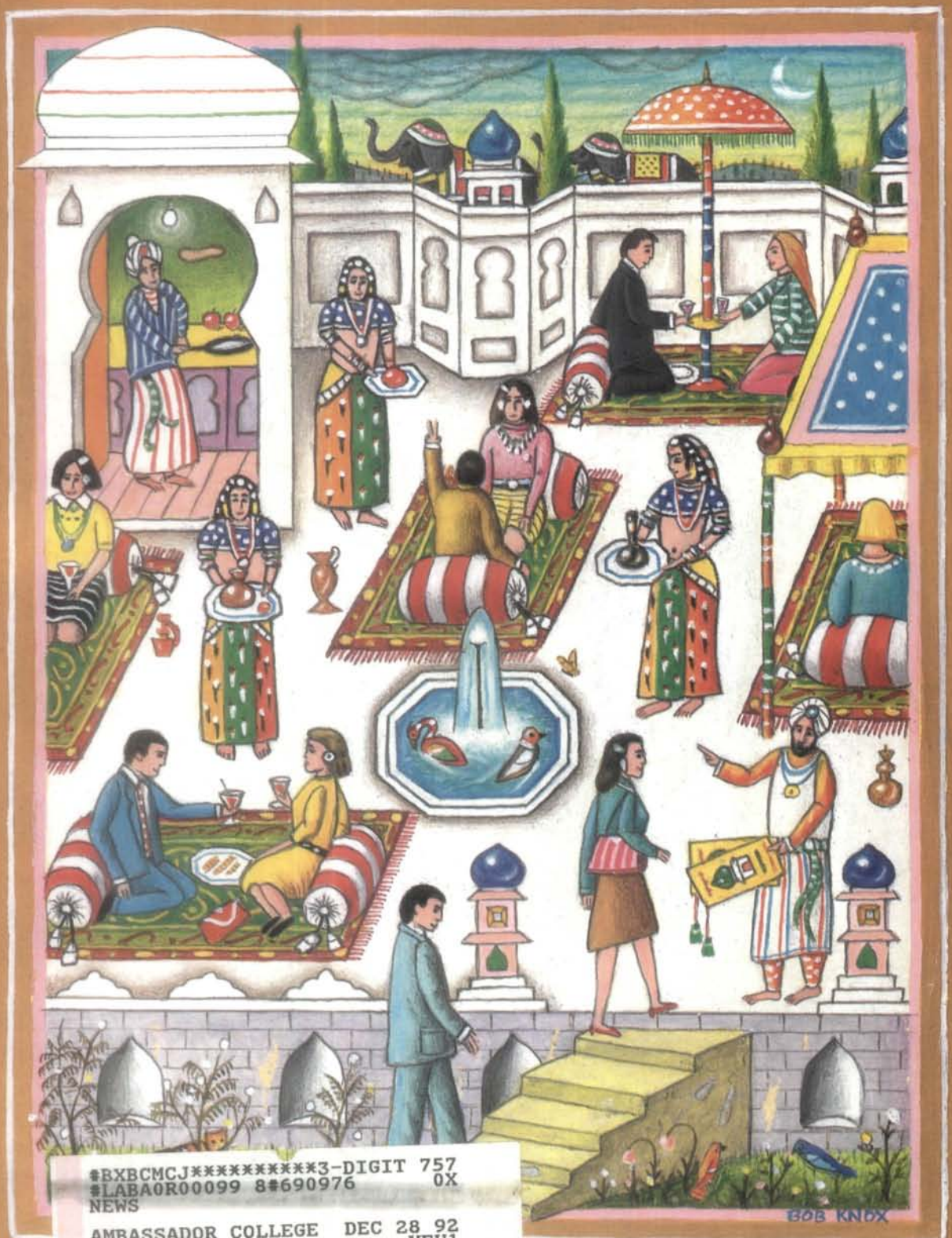

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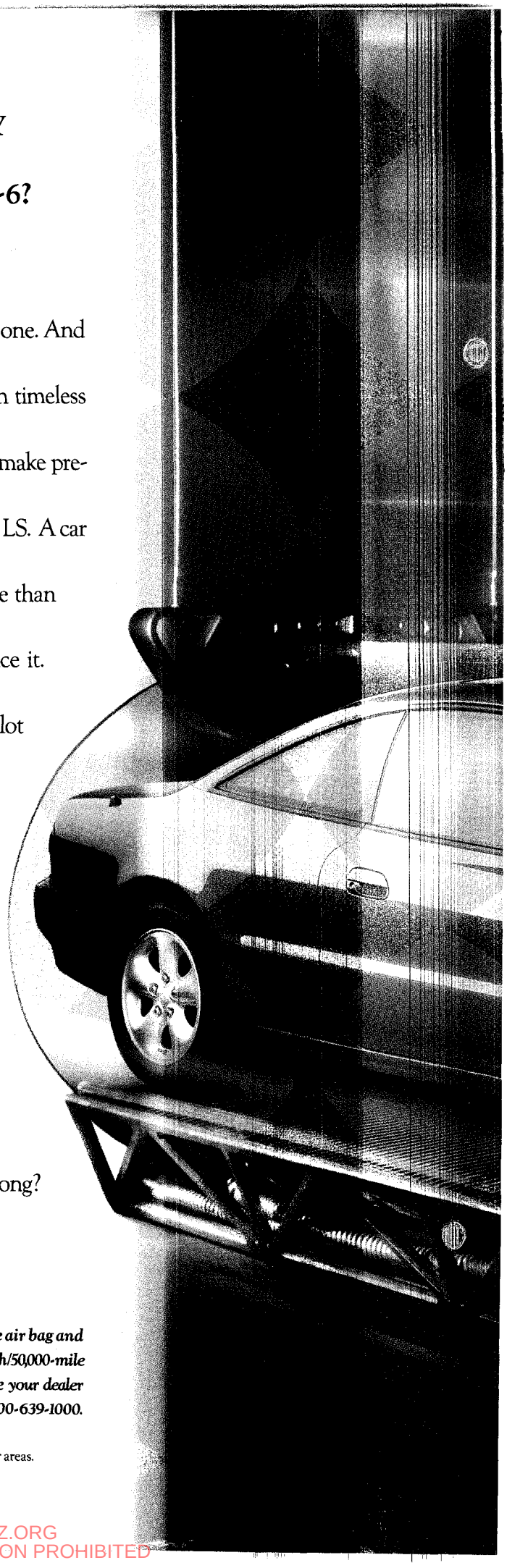

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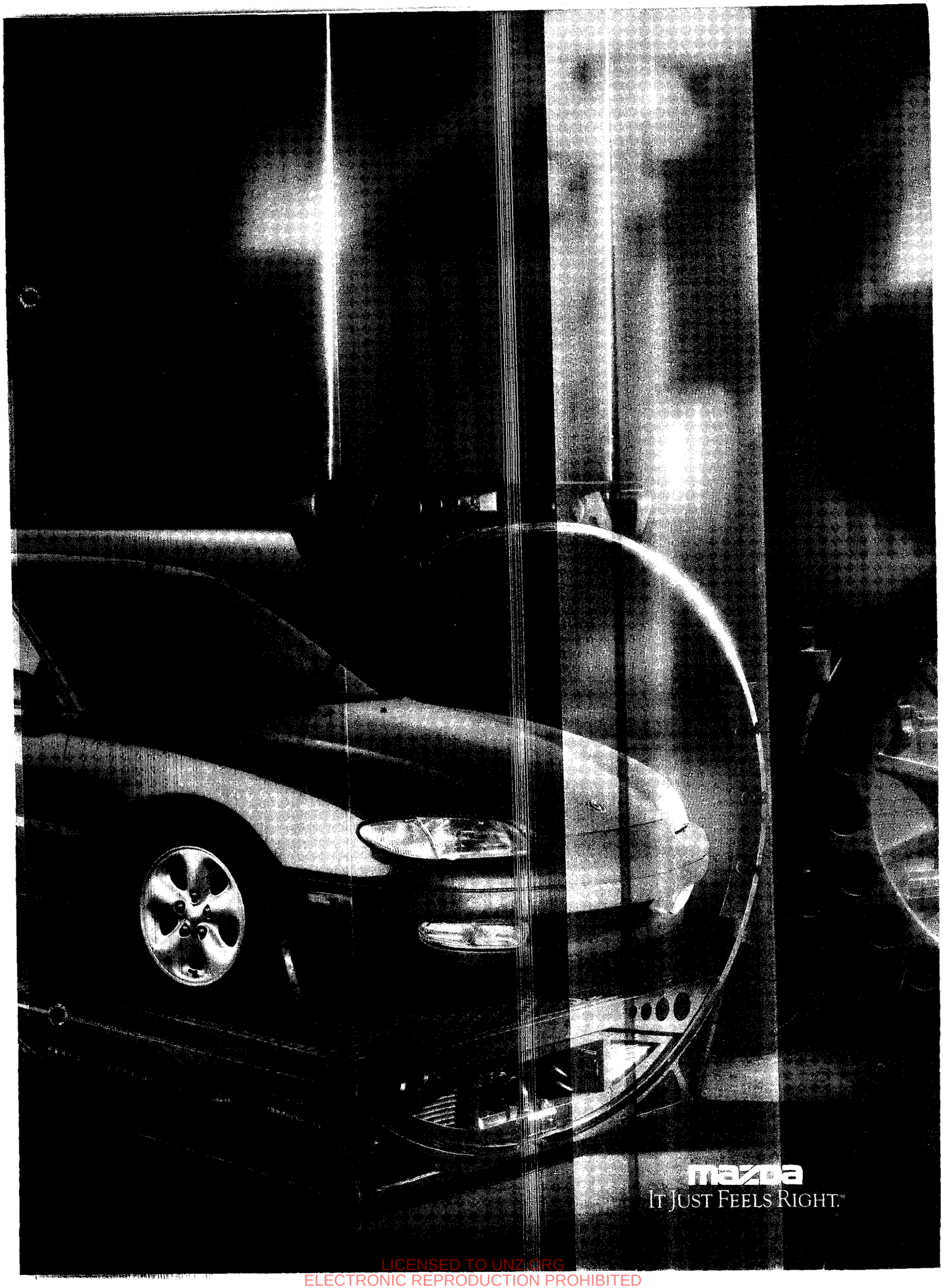

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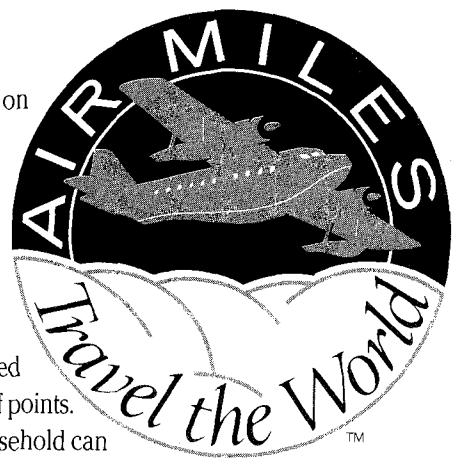

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

WHEN people ask us what's on and worth seeing, we frequently suggest one of the many improvisation or standup theatres around town, and we're always a little surprised when they seem taken aback, since we assume that, culturally speaking, comedy is king these days. The reason for its continuing vitality is not just the lassitude that some observers find among other forms of performance. Nor is its potency explained by the prospect of fame and fortune awaiting its lucky, talented practitioners (many of whom, alas, have been lured away from more conventional theatre), or by the existence of so many bungling policymakers in Washington—a group that gave rise to so many of the best, most biting acts during the eighties. (Politicians—O Dan Quayle!—have always been easy targets, after all.)

No, what continues to distinguish comedy from other forms of theatre is its reactive speed, the lightning quickness with which it feeds off the news media. Over the past month, none of the plays we've seen that deal with race (and there are many of them around, including Anna Deavere Smith's "Fires in the Mirror," at the Public) have struck as quickly to the heart of racial tensions as an improv artist we caught recently at Chicago City Limits (351 East 74th Street). The actor, a quick walk-on whose name we didn't catch, played a well-groomed, well-meaning network news reporter who, during some of the worst American rioting of the century, kicked off a press conference with Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates by asking, "Is Disneyland affected in any way?"

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

HAUPTMANN—A play by John Logan about Bruno Richard Hauptmann, the accused kidnapper of the Lindbergh baby. With Denis O'Hare in the title role. Recently seen at the Victory Gardens Theatre, in Chicago. Previews May 26-27. Opens May 28 at 8. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

NOWHERE—A work by the French playwright Reine Bartève, in a translation by Bruno Kernz and Lorraine Alexander. Directed by Françoise Kourilsky. With Julie Boyd, Stephen Mendillo, William Carden, and Du-Yee Chang. Previews May 26-29. Opens May 30 at 8, and runs through June 7. (Ubu Repertory Theatre, 15 W. 28th St. 679-7562.)

THE PRICE—Hector Elizondo, Debra Mooney, Joe Spano, and Eli Wallach in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of the Arthur Miller play. John Tillinger directed. In previews. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

PUNCH ME IN THE STOMACH—A one-woman show starring Deb Filler. Written by Ms. Filler and Alison Summers, who directed. Presented by New York Theatre Workshop. Previews May 27-31. Opens June 2 at 8. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl. 302-6989.)

SALOMÉ and **CHINESE COFFEE**—Al Pacino stars in two shows that will run in repertory. The first is a production of the Oscar Wilde work, and the second is a contemporary play by Ira Lewis. "Salomé" begins previews on May 25; "Chinese Coffee" on May 28. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

SPIKE HEELS—A play by Theresa Rebeck, with Kevin Bacon, Tony Goldwyn, Saundra Santiago, and Julie White. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

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WEIRD ROMANCE—Ellen Greene and Jonathan Hadary in a new science-fiction musical by Alan Brennert (book), Alan Menken (score), and David Spencer (lyrics). In previews. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BEAU JEST—A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

THE BEST OF FORBIDDEN BROADWAY—This tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's long-running, ever-fluctuating musical revue is, as one might expect, a treat. It features three old favorites (Michael McGrath, Toni DiBuono, and Roxie Lucas), and a Mr. Patrick Quinn, who is new to us and constitutes a real find. There is some new material, but our favorite sequences are still the spoof of "M. Butterfly" and the "Speed-the-Plow" number, "Madonna's Brain," in which David Mamet and Ron Silver try to teach Madonna to act and she ends up tearing off most of her clothes. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/4/92.) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

BLOOD WEDDING—Federico García Lorca's play is all but lost in a medley of clicking heels and empty recitations. The avant-garde runs rampant for ninety unbroken, torpid minutes. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes May 31.)

CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Marilyn Michaels, the fourth member of the company, does imitations of imitations. (12/23/91) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

CIRCLE REPERTORY COMPANY—The final play of the season is **EMPTY HEARTS**, by John Bishop. With Mel Harris and Cotter Smith. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes June 14.)

CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER—If you're looking for a totally satisfying theatrical experience, try the new Herb Gardner, a bittersweet memory play about a Lower East Side barkeep, his two sons, and the patrons of his tavern. As staged by Daniel Sullivan, with an ace cast led by the wonderful Judd Hirsch, the play does what "Jake's Women" and "Dancing at Lughnasa" would probably do if their authors were, respectively, more sophisticated and less sentimental. Grab this one. With Tony Shalhoub. (4/13/92) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

CRAZY FOR YOU—Loosely based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. The scenery is by Robin Wagner; the costumes are by William Ivey Long; and the masterly direction is by Mike Ockrent. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCING AT LUGHNASA—How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the Irish memory play from Hell. (11/4/91) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN—Mike Nichols' Americanized version of Ariel Dorfman's play (in which Juliet Stevenson took London by storm last year) is a sad disappointment. The play, which is set in "a country that is probably Chile" and concerns a woman's attempt to punish the man she holds responsible for torturing her in captivity fifteen years before, is anything but subtle, and Glenn Close, Richard Dreyfuss, and Gene Hackman are all grossly miscast. (3/30/92) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

DREAM OF A COMMON LANGUAGE—The Women's Project presents a play by Heather McDonald. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 873-3767. Closes June 7.)

ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATRE—The company's annual marathon of new one-act plays winds up with "Emma Keeps Talking," by Lise Erlich; "The Onliest One Who Can't Go Nowhere," by J.e Franklin; "Give the Bishop My Faint Regards," by Frank D. Gilroy; "Angels in the Men's Lounge," by OyamO; and "Blue Stars," by Stuart Spencer. (Ensemble Studio Theatre, 549 W. 52nd St. For information about tickets, call 247-3405. Closes June 7.)

THE EXTRA MAN—A new play by Richard Greenberg, featuring Adam Arkin, Boyd Gaines, Laila Robins, and John Slattery. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

FALSETTOS—This back-to-back revival of "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland," two of William Finn's three one-act musicals about a childish, self-absorbed man who leaves his wife and son for his not very nice male lover, is strictly for those who care. We've never understood the appeal of William Finn's "Marvin" trilogy. It has a chronology as complicated as the Oedipus cycle and a dramatic sensibility akin to that of the Oresteia. To us, though, it has always seemed like banality set to music: shallow, unlikable people expressing themselves in shallow, unlikable songs. (5/11/92) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

FIRES IN THE MIRROR: CROWN HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN AND OTHER IDENTITIES—Anna Deavere Smith's one-woman show. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE—The guys are black dancers and singers of ability and spirit, who perform the songs (either lyrics or music or both) of the late Louis Jordan, among them "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," "Ain't Nobody Here but Us Chickens," and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" This London import makes a merry evening. (4/20/92) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

GET USED TO IT—A new gay musical by Tom Wilson Weinberg. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 869-3530. Closes May 31.)

GUYS AND DOLLS—A lively production of Frank Loesser's musical, under the direction of Jerry Zaks. Nathan Lane and Faith Prince are the leading guy and doll, and Tony Walton designed the stunning scenery. (4/27/92) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

JAKE'S WOMEN—Alan Alda is at his genial best in the new Neil Simon. The play, about an aging writer trying to come to terms with the women in his life, past and present, is pretty much what you'd expect: some funny lines

Joseph Siravo and Mary Mara in "Dream of a Common Language"

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and a lot of phony dialogue. It's predictable, banal, and contrived, but at least it showcases a fine cast of actresses that includes Kate Burton and Joyce Van Patten. (4/6/92) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Jelly's Last Jam—The music of Jelly Roll Morton, self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, and, at the same time, an unsparing delineation of Morton himself. The show, an original if ever there was one, was written and directed by George C. Wolfe. In the starring role, Gregory Hines combines his astonishing talents as tap dancer and actor; Savion Glover, who plays the character as a young man, is worthy of him, which is saying a lot. Also present are Keith David, Tonya Pinkins, Wayne Mathis, and Mary Bond Davis. Luther Henderson has adapted Morton's music and offered some music of his own; the lyrics were written by Susan Birkenhead; and Hope Clark was the choreographer. (5/11/92) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Julie Halston's Lifetime of Comedy—For up-to-the-minute coverage of what it is like to be "divorced, over thirty, hormonally imbalanced," you can't do better than the wit and wisdom of this multitalented actress-comedienne-sage. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226. Closes June 7.)

Lotto (Experience the Dream)—A comedy by Cliff Roquemore. (Heckscher, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 369-6500.)

Macbeth—John Bolger and Cecil Hoffmann star in the Willow Cabin Theatre Company's production of Shakespeare's play. (One Dream, 2 North Moore St., at West Broadway. 886-1889. Closes June 7.)

Man of La Mancha—The granddaddy of all junk musicals. This road-show revival, starring Sheena Easton and Raul Julia, is in every respect adequate to the occasion. Miss Easton is not the most expressive actress in the world, but then Mr. Julia is not the most accomplished singer. Tony Martinez, who plays Sancho, recently celebrated his two-thousandth performance in the role—and it shows. Starting June 2, Joan Diener substitutes for Ms. Easton on Tuesday evenings and at Wednesday matinées. (5/11/92) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Marvin's Room—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering adolescent. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

The Most Happy Fella—This is one musical we think the world could be without and feel no sorrow. The story of a girl forced to content herself with some old duffer because some other old duffer wanted to teach everyone a lesson about making do with what life has to offer, it's pseudo opera superimposed on pseudo Americana. As for Gerald Gutierrez's Goodspeed Opera production, it's your basic slightly-better-than-average dinner-theatre revival. What's the rumpus? (2/24/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Real Live Brady Bunch—Episodes from the acclaimed TV series, reënacted by the Annoyance Theatre, of Chicago. Something called "The Real Live Game Show" comes first. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Ruthless!—This camp musical about a monster child star is harmless and amusing enough—assuming you can stomach the little girl. Personally, she gave us the pip. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

Sight Unseen—Donald Margulies' engrossing new play, which is about an Eric Fischl-type painter who decides to look up an old girlfriend he once treated badly, takes the contemporary art scene to task. Technically, it also plays around with time a good deal, though never sloppily or gratuitously. You end up being affected by a curious kind of resonance—it's earned, not something you've brought with you into the theatre. With Dennis Boutsikaris, Jon De Vries, Deborah Hedwall, and Laura Linney. (2/3/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

A Small Family Business—This cynical comedy is not the strongest of Alan Ayckbourn's plays, but there's fun in it all the same. With Brian Murray as an almost incorruptible executive and Anthony Heald as a ditto private investigator. (5/11/92) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Streetcar Named Desire—Gregory Mosher's revival, with Jessica Lange in the role of Blanche DuBois, plays like a parody. It features a cuddly, avuncular Stanley (Alec Baldwin), a Stella (Amy Madigan) straight out of a Carol Burnett skit, and a lot of embarrassing staging. Miss Lange's acting is all "for the camera." One feels that she is trying to rescue the role of Blanche from decades' worth of assumptions about it but hasn't had much help or guidance from her director. (4/27/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

The Substance of Fire—Jon Robin Baitz's play about an intransigent publisher at odds with his grown children, having moved from Playwrights Horizons, seems stronger than ever in this more formal theatre. The remarkable Ron Rifkin continues in the leading role, and he is ably supported by the members of the company—Patrick Breen, John Benjamin Hickey, Cordelia Richards, and Maria Tucci. (3/9/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Tubes—A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

Two Trains Running—August Wilson's latest, set in a Pittsburgh luncheonette in 1969, is one of those plays in which all the performances seem to be groping hotly after Tony nominations and everything is freighted with Meaning. (4/27/92) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Zora Neale Hurston—Laurence Holder's play about the author of "Their Eyes Were Watching God." (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes May 30.)

LONG RUNS

Cats: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.). . . **The Fantasticks:** The longest-running long run recently celebrated its thirty-second birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.). . . **Forever Plaid:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.). . . **Lips Together, Teeth Apart:** Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.). . . **Lost in Yonkers:** This family melodrama by Neil Simon, set in Yonkers during the Second World War, is about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.). . . **Les Misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **Miss Saigon:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.). . . **Nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.). . . **Pageant:** A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.). . . **Perfect Crime:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.). . . **The Phantom of the Opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **The Secret Garden:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **Song of Singapore:** A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.). . . **Tony N' Tina's Wedding:** The never-ending nuptials of Anthony Angelo Nunzio and Valentina Lynne Vitale. With audience participation, as you probably know. (St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.). . . **The Will Rogers Follies:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. With Mac Davis in the role of Will Rogers. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

DANCE

HOW many times has the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre performed Ailey's "Revelations"? "Thirty thousand, forty thousand, maybe fifty thousand times," Judith Jamison, the company's current artistic director, said. She was speaking at a recent symposium on "Revelations," at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center—an event held in conjunction with "Body and Soul," the Library's exhibition about the Ailey company, which is touring the country. Here are some other things we learned from the "Revelations" seminar:

• In choreographing "Revelations," Ailey drew on sources of imagery as various as the paintings of Brueghel, Oriental theatre, and recollections of Baptist services that he attended as a child in Texas. In the "Rock-a My Soul" section, for example, there's a moment when one of the women jiggles her arm as if she were miming a locomotive. The gesture refers to a friend of Ailey's mother's nicknamed Miss Choochoo, who would jump up and chug along in that fashion whenever the spirit moved her.

• Ailey's most dramatic editing of "Revelations" occurred between its première, in 1960, and 1969 or 1970. Everything got refocussed, became bigger, broader, sharper. Some possible reasons: the musical arrangements of the gospel songs changed from simple settings for voice and guitar to thickly orchestrated versions for choir; Ailey himself stopped dancing in 1965 and so began to look at his choreography from a more detached perspective; the expanding company needed to rescale its movement for the bigger theatres it was beginning to perform in.

• "Revelations" has never been notated or copyrighted. Its survival and its aesthetic integrity are entirely a matter of the oral tradition linking the generations of dancers who have performed it. Only one other company—a small group in Mexico—has ever been given permission to stage the work. By way of explanation, Dudley Williams, an Ailey dancer since 1964, said, "It's very personal to us. Why would you *want* to do it?" The costume designer, Ves Harper, said, "'Revelations' was the result of a kind of intellectual process which produced a behavior pattern that was not necessarily intellectual." He added, "I'm not sure that it can be taught. It has to be lived."

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DANCE–Cont'd

New York City Ballet—Presenting the Diamond Project, a week of new ballets, from May 27-31. (The repertory resumes June 2.) May 27 at 8: "Reunions," "I Have My Own Room," and "Mercury."... ¶ May 28 at 7:30: "Reunions," "Herman Schmerman," and "Jeu de Cartes." (A benefit performance.)... ¶ May 29 at 8: "Ancient Airs & Dances," "Bet Ann's Dance," and "Mercury."... ¶ May 30 at 2: "Flötezart," "Images," "Herman Schmerman," and "Reunions."... ¶ May 30 at 8: "Ancient Airs & Dances," "Refractions," "Two's Company," and "Jeu de Cartes."... ¶ May 31 at 1: "Bet Ann's Dance," "Images," "Refractions," and "Jeu de Cartes."... ¶ May 31 at 7: "Flötezart," "Two's Company," "I Have My Own Room," and "Mercury."... ¶ June 2 at 8: "Donizetti Variations," "The Waltz Project," and "Symphony in C."... ¶ June 3 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Antique Epigraphs," and "Glass Pieces." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The engagement will continue through June 28.)

Choreographer Robert LaFosse ("I Have My Own Room," at New York City Ballet)

American Ballet Theatre—May 25 at 8: "Coppélia."... ¶ May 26 at 8 and May 27 at 2 and 8: Act II of "Swan Lake," "Undertow," and Act III of "Raymonda."... ¶ May 28 at 8: Act II of "Swan Lake," "Grass" (American première), and Act III of "Raymonda."... ¶ May 29 and June 1-2 at 8; and May 30 and June 3 at 2 and 8: "The Sleeping Beauty." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. The engagement will continue through June 20.)

ISO Dance—A one-week engagement. The program: Three New York premières—"Slow Fade to Roger," "Trazom!," and "Madame Morphose"—and other works. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 26-29 at 8, May 30 at 2 and 8, and May 31 at 2 and 7:30.)

Ann Arbor Dance Works—In pieces by Gay Delanghe, Peter Sparling, and others. (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. May 30-31 at 8. For reservations, call 924-0077.)

Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center—Presenting four different programs. May 28: Solos, duos, and trios choreographed by Hernando Cortez, Duane Cyrus, Gary DeLoatch, Dwight Rhoden, and others.... ¶ May 29: Works by Joan Miller, Marlies Yearby, and others.... ¶ May 30: Solos, duos, and trios by Mr. Cyrus, Mr. DeLoatch, Ms. Miller, and others.... ¶ May 31: Performance pieces by Anita Gonzalez and others. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Performances at 8.)

Jane Comfort and Deborah Marcus—Ms. Comfort presents "Faith Healing," and Ms. Marcus offers "Beauty, Age and Grace." An informal discussion with the choreographers will follow the program. (University Settlement, 184 Eldridge St., at Rivington St. May 31 at 3. Admission by contribution.)

NIGHT LIFE

THE quadrant of the West Village bordered by Washington Square Park to the north, Bleecker Street to the south, Sixth Avenue to the west, and Broadway to the east has long been known as a hive of musical activity. Bleecker itself is the main drag. Once the haunt of pop and folk greats, it now belongs to a broad range of hopefuls, from the ultra-cheesy to the promising. As you move north, you find a smattering of clubs that make the Bleecker scene look glamorous. We investigated some of these on a recent Monday, which in this part of the world is open-mike night. Here's how the game works: troubadours, singly or in pairs, make the round of the clubs in the early evening and put their names on a list at each; then, usually, they have a few hours to kill, which can be done either by watching their fellow-aspirants or by wandering the streets (most people seem to choose the latter); when their moment comes, they're allowed two songs, and two songs only. Open-mike night demands precision timing.

Our first stop was Sun Mountain (82 West 3rd Street), a belowstairs establishment with a dark, mirrored, sixties-bohemian cabaret in the rear. The acoustic guitar was the instrument of choice, and most people were there to try out their own compositions. The smallish audience seemed to consist solely of musicians waiting their turn, along with the occasional loyal friend; if any A. & R. types were present, they were well disguised. Our second stop was the Lion's Den (214 Sullivan Street), a slick, high-ceilinged space with a distinctly heavy-metal aura. Here the procedure was a little different: musicians were invited to share the stage with the house band, a ragged, leather-and-earring-clad bunch with a wall of amplifiers at their disposal. We decided to move on, making our final stop at the Speakeasy (107 Macdougal Street), a folk house whose fortunes have ebbed and flowed over the years. It was getting late, and the audience had dwindled down to a handful of stragglers clustered around the bar, toward the rear of the room. A young woman onstage sang a song that consisted of a string of insults directed at the opposite sex. She was followed—by coincidence, we assume—by a young man who responded in kind. This must be the New Anger we've been hearing about.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The **wiseguys** take up residence in the Oak Room on June 2. Their program will feature such composers as Jerome Kern, Harold Arlen, Ray Noble, and Maltby and Shire. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings and mounted O'Keeffian animal skulls. Look closer and you'll find that the skulls are wearing earrings. After the show, be sure to check out the adjoining restaurant/tapas bar, which looks like the indoor food market of your dreams, and features a mural filled with people resembling Bob, Carol, Ted, and Alice. Jazz singer **blossom dearie**, who's put a spin on many a standard, will be performing May 26-28 at nine, May 29-30 at six-thirty and nine, and (for the brunch crowd) on May 31 at three. Martin Smith, a Cole Porter and Noël Coward specialist from London, will appear May 27-30 at ten-thirty and on May 31 at five. German cabaret singer **ingrid caven** begins a week-long engagement on June 2, with shows Tuesday through Thursday at nine, and Friday and Saturday at nine and eleven-fifteen. Closed Mondays.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. This week: the **benny salzano** sextet on May 27; the **jamie baum** sextet on May 28; **richie cole's** quintet May 29-30; and **christina wheeler** on May 31. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? **nancy wilson** is here May 26-31 and **vikki carr** starts up on June 2. Music from nine. Dining.

Blue Willow, 644 Broadway, at Bleecker St. (673-6480)—This room is oddly Victorian for lower Broadway, a region almost exclusively devoted to the celebration of youth culture. You won't find any funky murals or drinks with funny names here, just marble walls, antique furnishings, and a ceiling that would be hard to hit with a baseball. It's an agreeable place for conversation, which is probably why the small jazz combos that set up here nightly often get relegated to being background music. Music from seven-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This big, airy folk-and-rock club tends to be the site of a lot of music-industry bashes. If you have trouble getting tickets to the early show, it's usually because some record company has bought the place out. Don't despair: the later shows, though they're not as crowded and often run late, tend to be looser in spirit. **charlie rich**, who will be here on May 26, has just released "Pictures and Paintings." It's a cool, languorous, jazzy record that includes covers of Duke Ellington's "Mood Indigo" and Eddie Arnold's "You Don't Know Me." Rich, of course, is usually thought of as a country singer, and it's fun to hear him sing his careworn way through torch songs and blues. Rich will surely devote most of his set to "Pictures and Paintings," but perhaps he'll also include some of the hits from his Nashville days. Folksinger **phranc** comes in on May 27; **hal ketchum** is here on May 28; **taj mahal** performs on May 29; and **dave mason** is in residence May 30-31. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Next door, there's a bustling, garishly lit market. Within the narrow walls of this venerable piano-and-bass preserve, however, everything is easy on the eyes and ears. Pianist **james williams** and bassist **charnett moffett** work out May 25-30. Music from ten. Dining.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small, peach-walled storefront. Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or café au lait and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set. The café doesn't have a schedule per se, so it's often after the fact that one hears that some great Irish rocker has made a stop here. A frustrating state of affairs, perhaps, but one can have fun just hoping, waiting, and watching the door.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is currently home to **bobby short**. Mr. Short, who is accompanied by a bassist and a drummer, commands the room like a jovial headmaster. He has trouble sitting still: he keeps rising from the piano bench to snap his fingers, emphasize a lyric, or lean forward to address the audience. His selec-

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tions are uniformly witty and sly. Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, BARBARA CARROLL presides at the piano. Carroll's sets, which are usually equal parts jazz and cabaret, include songs by Gershwin, Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Dizzy Gillespie, and Billy Strayhorn, along with some of her own. Music from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club—a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti—is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. Music from eight on Sundays and Mondays, from eight-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (255-7373)—A club that features "only Chicago-area blues artists working with their regular Chicago blues bands." This concept may not appeal to New York blues artists, but it could save local blues aficionados a trip to the Midwest. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. Pianist DON PULLEN, a former Charles Mingus sideman whose excursions are likely to touch on bop, soul, and free jazz, chairs his group, African-Brazilian Connection, beginning June 2. Music at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays and at nine-thirty, eleven-thirty, and one on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

DUPLEX, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—A two-floor entertainment center. The bright, clean, wedge-shaped downstairs bar has French windows giving on to the bustle of Seventh Avenue, but the clamor indoors is far greater. Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, and the waitresses sing/shout pop standards with risqué lyrics and fire off wisecracks across the room; patrons are encouraged to take the mike, too. Upstairs there's a quieter bar and a cabaret, where you'll find a variety of performers nightly.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. A quartet led by the fiery, Memphis-bred tenor saxophonist GEORGE COLEMAN holds sway May 26-31, and RED RODNEY begins work on June 2. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor LES PAUL, the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An unpretentious second-floor jazz retreat where a bandleader was once heard saying, "I wanna introduce my drummer first on account of because he has to go put a quarter in the meter." The lineup: SILVANA MALTA'S foursome on May 27; the BILL MAYS trio on May 28; CARLA WHITE'S quartet on May 29; KEN PEPLOWSKI'S quintet on May 30; and the VIRG DZURINKO trio on May 31. Music from eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

JUDYS', 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—An intimate, burgundy-walled *boîte* attached to the Iroquois Hotel. In the front room, which is decorated with photos of famous Judys—and of the famous daughter of a famous Judy—a pianist keeps the happy-hour barbirds occupied. In the dining room, vocalists work out from nine. Shows at nine Mondays through Thursdays, and at nine and eleven on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A frat house for the avant-garde. In some ways, the Knitting Factory doesn't really belong in New York: the cover charge is too reasonable, the management is too laid back, the audiences are too polite. It's a slice of post-collegiate counterculture that somehow landed on Houston Street. NORA YORK performs on May 26. KING MISSILE, who will be here on May 27, recently released its first major-label album, a bizarre and hilarious outing titled "The Way to Salvation." The band is fronted by John S. Hall, a performance-artist type whose vocals are, for the most part, nasty political monologues with titles like "To Walk Among the Pigs." M'LUMBO and Love and Life are here on May 28; JOHN ZORN leads Cobra on May 31; the JOLLY CRATERS come in on June 1; and MAKANDA MC INTYRE appears on June 2. Music after nine.

LAUTERBACH'S BROOKLYN BEAT, 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—It's an improbable bar in an unlikely location, but Lauterbach's has spawned a scene of sorts—and the owners have a wall of press clippings to prove it. In its short life span as a rock venue (it had a longer one as a neighborhood bar—the kind of place where Archie Bunker might feel at home), the club has become HQ for a tight little community of Brooklyn bands, a development that has apparently brought in enough money for the club's recent facelift. Still, it's not as though you need a tux to get in the door.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—Spiffed-up theatre patrons walk by this club's façade—a Silver Eagle bus, with tires you can kick—and scratch their heads. Inside, big bearded guys with cowboy hats rub elbows at the bar while newcomers study the Texas memorabilia and, upstairs, the display of vintage Gibson guitars. The dining room, where bands hold sway, features a Wright Brothers-era airplane suspended from the ceiling, a dance floor where you can kick up some dust, and a balcony for quiet types. RICHARD TEE is here on May 28, and E, a young singer-songwriter worth checking out, will be here on June 3. Show times vary. Dining.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A bright spot on the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. The guitarist and singer JOHNNY CLYDE COPELAND, who'll perform here on May 28, is a powerful presence. A short, barrel-chested man with laser-beam eyes, Copeland sings with a gospel fervor that can blow other musicians off the stage. TINO GONZALES and the Santa Fe Blues Band are in action May 29-30. Sets from nine-fifteen, except Sundays, when they begin at eight-forty-five.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. The MEKONS, who play a two-night stand May 25-26, are longtime critical and cult favorites who have never managed to reach a mass audience. This Leeds band presents itself as a cross between a revolutionary commune and a seminar on itself, which would be pretty awful if these survivors from the days of punk didn't play such marvellous, haunting music. Other events: Fly Ashtray and Kickstand on May 28; Sonny Burgess, and the Belmont Playboys, on May 29; the Wreckless Eric Band and the Friggs on May 30. Show times vary.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—There's more to Michael's Pub than Woody Allen, whose occasional Monday-night Dixieland binges have given the place a little star cachet. Non-filmmakers can usually be found onstage here the rest of the week, in a main dining room that strives for the appearance of a British pub but looks more like a good old American family restaurant. Still, there's a real nice red telephone booth when you walk in the door. A program devoted to Jelly Roll Morton runs through May 30, with vocalist ELLIA ENGLISH and pianist TERRY WALDO. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Up, up, and away. This glitzy cabaret, which sits atop Rockefeller Plaza, has of late been home to a number of revues. The most unusual of them is surely "Cowboy Logic," a Western-style revue which features MICHAEL MARTIN MURPHEY, WADDIE MITCHELL, and DON EDWARDS, and which has pitched its tent here for a spell. Shows from nine. Jonathan Schwartz holds forth on Sunday evenings at seven and nine-thirty; on May 31, he'll be joined by JULIE WILSON and BILLY ROY. Dining. Closed Mondays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steak house, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS (though Lynn Oliver's band will replace the Nighthawks on May 29), Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. Show times vary.

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs at this opulent landmark (currently celebrating its sixty-fifth anniversary), there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret that features big names most Sundays and up-and-comers on occasional Mondays. On June 1, you can catch singer Dee Hoty and pianist-and-songwriter Steve Lutvak. Shows at eight and ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The closest thing in Manhattan to a rain forest, this venerable club has many selling points: tropical drinks, Brazilian food, faux palm trees, a thatch-roofed bar. The live music is primarily from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean, and the dance floor is usually hopping. Music from nine Mondays, from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

SPACE AT CHASE, 98 Third Ave., at 12th St. (475-1407)—One of those East Village joints where, for a few bucks, you can hear a handful of local rock bands. As is usually the case at these establishments, some of the bands will make you want to cower under the pinball machine while others will make you want to dance and shout and start your own independent label. As for décor, there's a bar, some chairs, some tables, some walls, a ceiling, and two dart boards. Music from nine-thirty, except on Tuesdays, when it starts at seven.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A celebrated shrine of jazz with a silence-or-else policy during shows. The trio of pianist PAUL BLEY, reed-player JIMMY GIUFFRE, and bassist GARY PEACOCK is here through May 31, and the JOHN SCOFIELD quartet begins a week-long stand on June 2. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter MILES EVANS is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Thanks to low lighting, muralled pillars, ironwork, and a beautifully restored old tin ceiling, this loft space manages to feel homey. The sound system can be overwhelming, but the place is big enough to accommodate both those who want to lose their hearing and those who don't. Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main order of business here. The Australian outfit YOTHU YINDI, which combines traditional Aboriginal music with more straightforward rock and roll, performs on May 30. Sets at eight and eleven weeknights, eight-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Yothu Yindi at Tramps

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, slice-of-pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and

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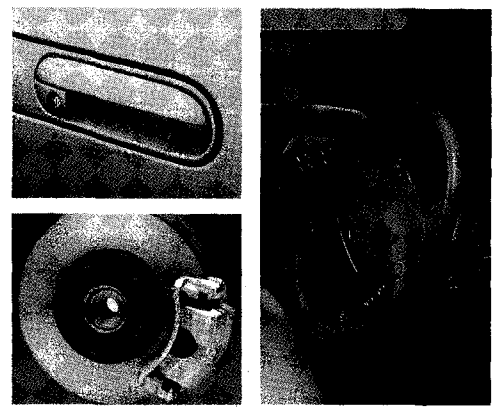

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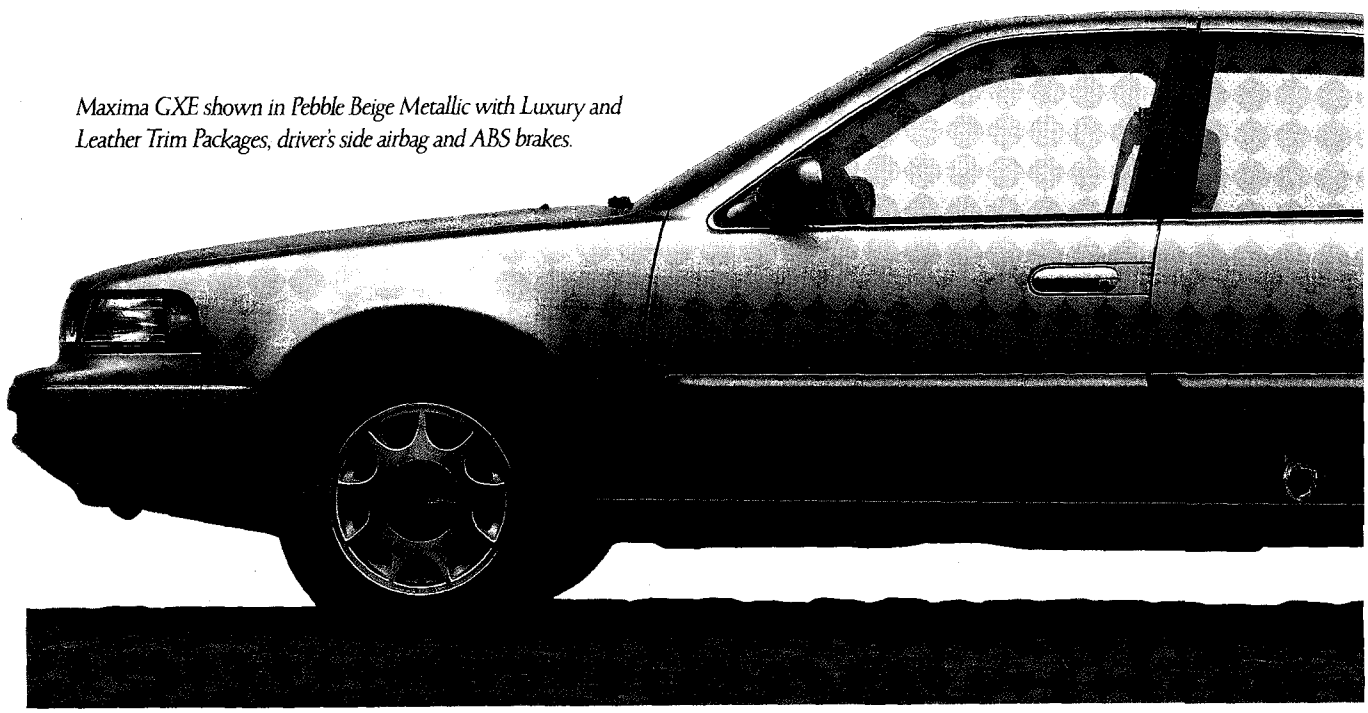

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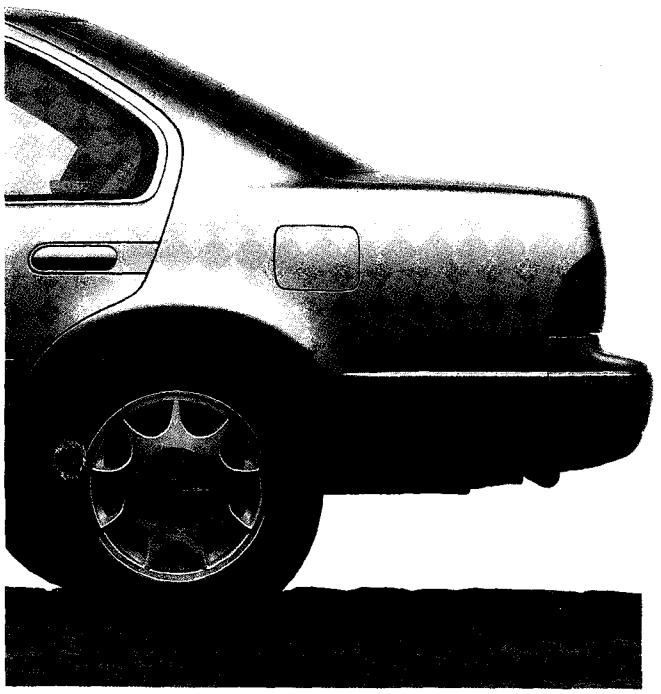

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TELE-ART

If you grew up in the forties or fifties—and spent any time in front of the TV on Saturday or Sunday morning—you probably remember the man with the Vandyke beard and the plaid flannel shirt (betraying his Pretty Prairie, Kansas, roots) whose reassuring message was, "If you can draw these simple forms—the ball, cone, cube, and cylinder—you can draw a real picture the very first time you try."

The Brownstone Gallery (76 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn) is currently displaying (through May 30) more than forty original drawings by the late Jon Gnagy, made either in rehearsal for or during his pioneering weekly show, "You Are An Artist." Bold, if virtually styleless, the drawings' subjects range from a Venetian gondolier to the Eiffel Tower (although Gnagy never got past the East River), from wishing wells and covered wagons to a wide-eyed Keanesque cocker-spaniel puppy. Nature figured in his tutorials as well—there's one wildlife drawing, of Canada geese poised on a shore, displayed alongside a TV monitor playing a tape of the program on which the work was demonstrated ("We start with basic forms, and then work to get a mood"). The word probably has to be "demonstrated," rather than "created," since no one could claim that Gnagy's drawings were at all original—indeed, a national art committee back then actually accused his work of being "destructive to the creative and mental growth of children." He responded, in his characteristically low-key way, that his purpose was simply "to get as many people as possible to sketch on their own and to be observant of the things around them."

Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. Trumpeter **ROY HARGROVE** leads a quintet May 26-31; **MARK WHITFIELD'S** trio begins work on June 2. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagenbus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. **BILLY GOAT** and **SWEET LIZARD ILLTET** share the bill on May 29. The latter is a locally based band, whose members define "illtet" as "like quartet or quintet, only sicker." The group recently released their first record, an industrial bouillabaisse that mixes rock, rap, and reggae. **INDECISION** and **COUNTRY JOE MC DONALD** peform on May 30, and **ALICE DONUT** comes in on May 31. Music at ten.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Pianist **HILTON RUIZ** is on hand May 26-30, with varying accompanists. **CYNTHIA SCOTT'S** trio holds forth on May 31. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, from nine on Fridays and Saturdays, and from seven-thirty on Sundays.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

THE two young men dancing so hard they could feel the floor bounce—"It's just like Paradise Garage," one of them shouted—couldn't handle the timing of 108 Bowery's birth. "The best small space I've been to in ages opens two weeks before we all run to the beach," the other replied. "I hate that." "It's so unbalancing," his friend concurred. "Very 'Koyaanisqatsi.'"

But plenty of others who looked as if they weren't going to be staple-gunning duck cloth to an old club chair in Sagaponack anytime soon were maintaining their equilibrium with effortless panache, and we suddenly realized that, after months of dud clubs, here, in the stalest of bar settings, was a blast of freshness. Simon Wilson and Edward Jowdy have taken what during the week could only be called a derelict bar and, on Saturdays, made it terrific.

To accomplish this transformation, they've spared most expense. The dance floor was lit by a neon guitar and the beam from a single unblinking red spot trained on a lone mirror ball. The men's room floor could give any surveyor a facial tic. One of the video monitors showed a hypnotically ghastly science-fiction-adventure-musical-comedy tribute to Busby, Marlene, and the Marx Brothers (with the sound off). The d.j. balanced his speakers on milk cartons and his work light on two rolls of toilet paper. The music coming out of his speakers, however, got the bunch here almost as nuts about night life as they already seemed to be about each other. People whooped when the records skipped, cheered each time the coat-check person climbed onto a tabletop, went hysterical when the d.j. played the Stones' pop-glop-but-cult-supreme dance demi-classic "Emotional Rescue," and snickered when someone came in bearing a Sunday paper that had already written about the place—very positively, too. But the column neglected to mention one of the most distinctive features of 108 Bowery: most of the clientele is gay. "I think I'd rather be 'fashion-forward,'" one young man said, with mock shyness, quoting the euphemism the column had settled on. "It's like reviewing Lypsinka and forgetting to mention that she's a man," added one self-declared regular. "That's crazy." Or perhaps just out of balance.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"ROY COHN/JACK SMITH"—A play conceived by Ron Vawter. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. May 26-30 and June 2-3 at 8. Through June 6.)

"THE VULTURE SPEAKS"—A collaborative work by William Pope L., Jim Calder, Joan Harmon, and Sigfrido Aguilar. (Downtown Art Co., 64 E. 4th St. 732-1227. May 28-30 at 8 and May 31 at 5. Through June 7.)

"FLESH HISTORIES"—A program of film and video about gender, family, and sexuality. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. May 28-30 at 8:30.)

"LESBIANS WHO KILL"—A play by Deb Margolin, with Lois Weaver and Peggy Shaw. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. May 28-30 at 10.)

HOT PEACHES—In "Christopher Street Columbus." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. May 28-29 and May 31 at 8, and May 30 at 8 and 11.)

ART

GUILLAUME GALLOZZI, a young French dealer who has been on the scene here since the early eighties, has in recent years carved out a personal niche for himself, in an old-fashioned, decidedly recherché way. Leaving the contemporary markets to others, he has become a specialist in European art and miscellany from roughly the Surrealist period, and in particular from Britain—a rather murky field. Whenever he has enough material to suggest a theme, he puts together a catalogue, sends out a mailing, makes a few calls, and mounts an exhibition in the red brick row house, at 203 West Houston Street, where he also lives. This approach makes for a pleasantly irregular sort of visit. Pictures, chez Gallozzi, are hung all over the place—high up on the walls, for instance, of his double-height living room, which is bedecked, grotto-style, with moss, and all the way up a steep and narrow stairwell. If you're more than a little interested in whatever you see, Gallozzi usually has plenty of related stuff—books and archival fun facts—to show or tell you.

A little over two years ago, he put on a very unusual show, "The British War Artists," which, in addition to presenting works by painters of established reputation, also featured such curios as "Somewhere in France," a tapestry depicting a lone soldier observing an exploding battleground, and other items by artists, many of them anonymous, who worked as propagandists or camouflage designers during the First and Second World Wars.

Shortly after that exhibition, Gallozzi experienced his own brush with death, in the form of a brain tumor, as a result of which his mind was filled with thoughts—hallucinations, perhaps—of transformation and regeneration. He promised himself, he can tell us now, that if he recovered he would do something to convey this vision to others. "Metamorphose" (open Thursdays through Saturdays, 1 to 6; through June 20), is the fulfillment of that promise. It includes small works from the mid-thirties to the mid-fifties by British artists, all of them rendered in a feverish, Surrealist style. Famous figures like Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland are represented, but most of the artists are little known. Steven Sykes, who was born in 1914 and is still living, is the one whom Gallozzi, quite tellingly, considers to be his find. In Sykes's "Untitled (Anthropomorphic Moonscape)," a crescent moon like a bulging eye looms out of a red-tinted sky over a craggy landscape of bewitched and dancing vegetation.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Korean Ceramics from the Ataka Collection" includes more than a hundred examples of celadon ware and other glazed ceramics from the tenth century through the nineteenth. Through July 12. . . . ¶ A large gathering of paintings, drawings, and prints by the Paduan Renaissance master Andrea

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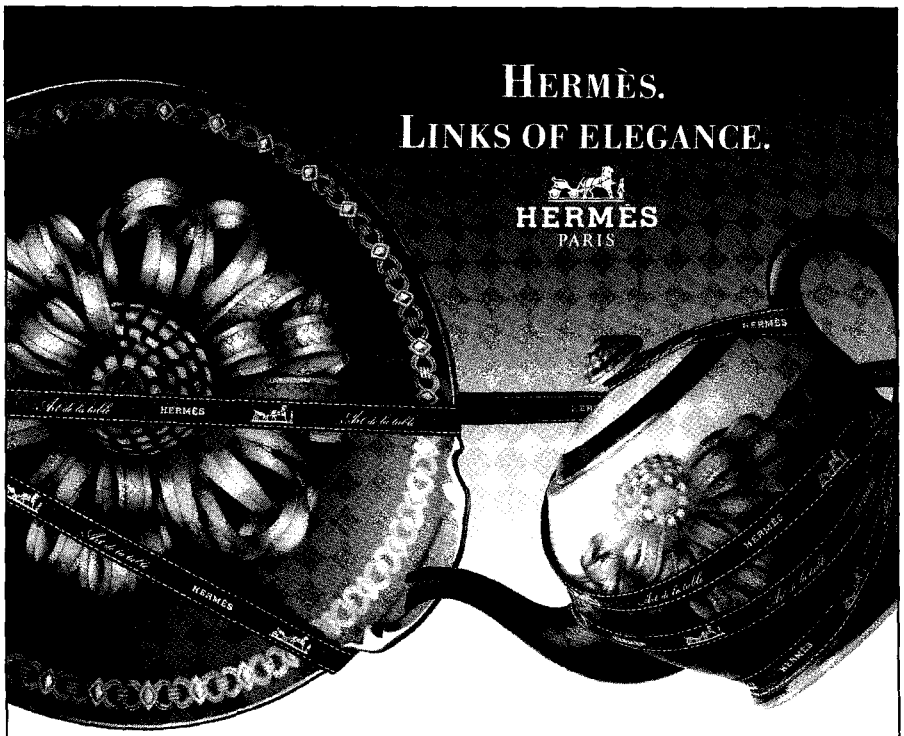
Mantegna. Through July 12. . . . ¶ A retrospective of black-and-white and color photographs by Helen Levitt. Through June 28. . . . ¶ Fifty works by William Harnett (1848-92), an Irish-American painter who was the father of the trompe-l'oeil school. Through June 14. . . . ¶ "Modern Design: 1890-1990" shows off the museum's holdings in twentieth-century furniture, architectural and design drawings, glass, ceramics, and other objects. . . . ¶ The recent donation of the Perls collection—a hundred and sixty-three objects from the kingdom of Benin—has substantially redefined the museum's African holdings. This exhibition of the collection is a welcome relief from the rigid theatre of many of the museum's blockbusters: it enables viewers to make their own discoveries. . . . ¶ "The Lotus Transcendent." Through June 28. . . . NOTE: The museum's roof garden, planted with eight sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Antoni Tàpies in Print" presents more than a hundred lithographs, intaglio prints, and illustrated books, from the forties to the present, by the Catalan artist. Through Aug. 9. (A complementary show of prints and books is at Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St., through May 29.). . . ¶ Matthew McCaslin's "Projects" installation consists of a three-dimensional grid of metal wall studs interspersed with numerous electrical outlets, lengths of cable, five clocks, and a bare light bulb. Through June 2. . . . ¶ Félix González-Torres has also created a piece for the "Projects" series. An enlarged black-and-white image of a slept-in, empty double bed is on view here, while the same image appears on billboards throughout the city. Through June 30. . . . ¶ Photographs by Gertrude Käsebier (1852-1934), including genre scenes, allegorical compositions, and portraits of New Yorkers, Native Americans, and fellow-photographers. Through July 14. (See Photography.). . . ¶ "More than One Photography," an exhibition of sixty post-1980 works that incorporate photography in one way or another, drawn from each of the museum's six curatorial departments. Through July 19. . . . ¶ Twenty-three videotapes, mostly from the seventies, by Joan Jonas, Nam June Paik, and William Wegman. Through July 16. . . . ¶ A display of glass and ceramic tableware by Finnish designer Kaj Franck. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until early summer.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Eighty-five works by Richard Prince, including his "re-photography," drawings, collages, silk-screen paintings, and wall reliefs. Through July 12. . . . ¶ A well-framed, expertly installed, compact exhibition of recent "Pastels" by Joan Mitchell. They're beautiful: vibrant, nimble, and utterly authoritative, though seemingly unfettered. Mitchell is in peak form here. Through June 21. . . . ¶ The first installment of a show of more than seventy paintings and sculptures is on view; all of the works are recent additions to the museum's collection. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)



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Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Tacit Transit," a new installation, by Korean-born artist Jin Soo Kim, that consists of wire-mesh modules and found objects. Starts May 29. . . . ¶ A display of first-edition etchings from Giovanni Battista Piranesi's "Carceri d'Invenzioni" group. Through July 26. . . . ¶ "Contemporary Wood Sculpture" includes works by Kenji Fujita, Jane Greengold, and Louise Nevelson, among others. Through June 7. . . . ¶ "Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, Broadway at 155th St.—The annual exhibition of works by new members includes pieces by Chuck Close, Martin Puryear, Saul Steinberg, and Elizabeth Murray. Through June 14. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"An Album of Interiors" consists of more than sixty nineteenth-century watercolors, from two private family collections—one American and one European. Through Aug. 23. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays 1 to 6.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—"Japanese Folk Art: A Triumph of Simplicity" features more than eighty sculptures, signs, baskets, masks, and other objects from the late fourteenth century to the early twentieth. Through July 2. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Sketching at Home and Abroad," more than a hundred British landscape drawings and watercolors—from the literal to the lyrical—by Turner, Constable, Wilson, Gainsborough, and others. Through Aug. 2. . . . ¶ Puss in Boots, the Master Cat, is the subject of an exhibition that spans three hundred years' worth of illustrations, beginning with Charles Perrault's original manuscript of Mother Goose stories. Through Aug. 9. . . . ¶ A show that examines, through illustrated treatises, the development of the English landscape garden. Through Aug. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5, Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A hundred and twenty-four prints, drawings, and watercolors by the German artist Lovis Corinth (1858-1925). Through June 28. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—Nearly forty artists have lent their vision to "The Art Mall," a conceptual cornucopia of kiosks, nail salons, fashion shows, and a Santa Claus. Through June 28. . . . ¶ "Last Words," the Broadway-window video installation by Seyed Alavi, presents pictures of Oakland high-school students, superimposed with their response to this proposal: "Imagine that you had the opportunity to speak on national television, but are limited to a single word. Consider further that after you say your word you must take a vow of silence. In essence, this word would be your last." Yikes. Through June 28. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—A show chronicling the design, construction, and urban context of New York's City Hall (1803-12). Forty-seven drawings, along with watercolors, prints, books, and a model, illuminate the neoclassical edifice. Through June 28. . . . ¶ "Forever Wild: The Adirondack Experience" presents two hundred paintings, photographs, architectural plans, pieces of furniture, and other objects. Through July 12. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—Noguchi (1904-88) designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his own sculptures. The entire range of his work is on view—from the early surrealistic biomorphic sculptures through several types of stone carvings—as is documentation of his prodigious public-art projects. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful, ivy-walled garden dotted with sculptures. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—Fifty-seven paintings, drawings, and instal-

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lations by the twenty-five-year-old Russian artist Sergei Bugaev, a.k.a. Afrika. Through June 14. . . . ¶ "Circumference," an installation of hand-blown glass objects by Robin Stanaway. Through June 14. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A retrospective of fifty works by the painter Archibald J. Motley, Jr. Through June 7. . . . ¶ "Africa and the Diaspora" features nearly a hundred works from the museum's collection, dating from the fifth century to the present. Through June 7. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Herbert Haseltine (1877-1962)/**William Stanley Haseltine** (1835-1900)—A mundane assortment of cows, horses, and pigs. At first, the works seem to be pure homespun Americana—there are enough sentimentally mimetic bronzes to satisfy the most fervid Remington enthusiast—but after a while they become endearing, especially the pigs. / William Stanley Haseltine, the father, studied at the Düsseldorf Academy and trekked throughout Europe, yet his sketches and paintings, of Bavaria, the Swiss lakes, Venice, Rome, and various picturesque spots in New England, are simply dull. Through June 5. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

Short List—Roberto Aizenberg, CDS Gallery, 76 E. 79th St. (open Sundays, noon to 3, through June 30); **Georg Baselitz,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through June 12), and Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through June 26); **James Rosenquist,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through July 11); **David Smith,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through June 27); **Richard Smith,** Feigen, 49 E. 68th St. (through June 20).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Philip Smith—A strong show of recent paintings. Smith has a highly idiosyncratic, painstaking technique. First, he makes a sort of rough-draft abstraction, using broad swaths of color, which he buries under a waxy monochrome. Then he scratches hundreds of inscrutably personal, spidery little hieroglyphic drawings into these surfaces using the tip of a screwdriver, in the process revealing bits of underlying pigment. The results of these concealments and revelations, at once serenely lyrical and overwrought, suggest a peculiar synthesis of Cy Twombly, Raoul Dufy, and, possibly, recent paintings by William Wegman. What's more, they have considerable decorative appeal in addition to their febrile poetics. Through June 12. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St.)

Short List—Valerio Adami, Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 6); **Avigdor Arikha** and **Magdalena Abakanowicz,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 6); **Jared French,** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through May 29); **Sonia Gechtoff,** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through June 6); **Ron Janowich** and **Frederic Thursz,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through July 31); **Ed Ruscha,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 13); **George Segal,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 6); **Dorothea Tanning,** Cavaliero-Navarra, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 6); **Antoni Tàpies,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. (through May 29); **John Wilde,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 30).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Eric Bulatov / Oleg Vassiliev—This show includes a gorgeous painting by Bulatov of the broad view, at sunrise, from the window of his Moscow studio. The work has a beautiful light, as well as the sense of stability one usually associates with home. Indeed, occupying the center third of the canvas is the Russian word for "home," which is painted in a delectable Rymanesque white. / Many of Vassiliev's works consist of an apparitional image in the center of the canvas, bathed in white light and mystically surrounded by prismatic color. They are rather trite, albeit well painted. More compelling is a blue-tinged grisaille of a woman walking through a park on a rainy day, on her way home from the market. In the foreground are brown leaves encircling the figure. The painting has the primal-memory quality that the other works here reach for, but without their hokey mystical overlay. Through May 30. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Ernst Caramelle—The most impressive work in this Austrian artist's show of paintings and watercolors is a simple, two-part geometric wall painting that incorporates the gallery's windows; it gives one the illusion that one is looking at the frescoed walls of an Umbrian villa. Through June 6. (Burgin, 130 Prince St.)

Jacqueline Humphries—Paintings of dab-and-drip paint storms. The artist has a strong hand and a good feel for earth tones, but fails to add anything to territory already better explored by Pat Steir and Ross Bleckner. Through June 20. (Good, 532 Broadway.)

Byron Kim and **Kiki Smith**—A thoughtful show comprising one work by each artist, in both of which the standard minimalist grid is pressed into the service of body politics. Kim has made two hundred little canvases—painted from life—cake-frosted in every conceivable shade of human skin color. Smith's work consists of a grid of small, shiny aluminum squares of different textures, all of them cast impressions of skin or hair. Both works can be seen as a kind of portraiture, in which microscopic examination yields an expansive impressionism. Through June 3. (A/C Project Room, 580 Broadway.)

Curtis Mitchell—Overly self-conscious works that have been deliberately torn, cracked, and distressed. A huge collage, made of wood, Sheetrock, wallpaper, and photos, was ripped apart and the pieces left scattered where they fell; it is modestly engaging, although its title, "History of Spring '92," could have been less grandiose. Perhaps the most noticeable work is the one that's the least labored. It consists of a shattered aquarium reassembled with caulk and filled with a mixture of coagulated lard and 2000 Flushes. Through June 13. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Tim Rollins + K.O.S.—A provocative arrangement of four works that examine individuality in the face of the group. Pages from "The Red Badge of Courage" are covered with wounds, each painted by a different Kid, some stunning, like Delaunays or Tantric designs, others muddied, like diseased cells. Likewise, the huge gaseous circle painted in blood on the pages of Flaubert's "The Temptation of St. Anthony" looks like something from a lab slide, or like an inchoate planet. More curious, if only for their unfamiliarity, are two blunter works: one of them consists of a painted, star-filled sky in which the stars are bits of broken glass and mirror, and the other of logs scattered on the gallery floor, each log inset with a pair of eyes based on those of a member of K.O.S. The work's provocative title, "Pinocchio," may suggest that the true relation of Rollins to his Kids' imaginations is that of Geppetto to his wooden puppet—though he can shape them, he cannot bring them to life. Through June 27. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Ann Sperry—The artist's pioneering efforts to "feminize" the genre of steel sculpture continue to become more expressive. Fifteen years ago, her approach was to paint her steel pink. Nowadays her dexterity is such that she can bend and shape heavy metal into forms whose supple, sensuous surfaces look as soft as skin. Through May 30. (A.I.R., 63 Crosby St.)

Jessica Stockholder—Stockholder is a scatter artist with a difference—namely, an attentiveness to color and composition, making her a sort of more aestheticized and therefore less venturesome Cady Noland. But as her work has got larger, the fundamental lack of ambition that has characterized it all along has become more evident. In this installation, she attempts a Schwitters-like "Merzbau" that, if it were successful, might make one feel as if one were walking into Rauschenberg's "Bed." Through June 6. (American Fine Arts, 40 Wooster St.)

Sue Williams—Williams makes fierce, disturbing paintings about misogyny and the physical abuse of women. They smack you over the head yet also seem somehow measured and considered. There are also several sculptures in this exhibition: one is of a pair of buttocks smashed by a baseball bat; another is of a battered woman, lying on the floor, covered with boot prints and pronouncements blaming the woman and defending her male attacker. The most haunting work is a takeoff on Richard Prince's joke paintings, which are notorious for the supposed irony of their sexism. Williams' works turn a corner where there is no room for irony, and there is only abuse. In one of the painting's images, a doctor with a *Playboy* smile holds his stethoscope to a woman's nipple; in another, a husband screws his wife's brains out while holding a gun to her head. The jokes are very unfunny, and therein lies the work's bite. Through May 30. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Lovis Corinth at the National Academy of Design

Elyn Zimmerman—Zimmerman is known primarily for environmental-scale public sculptures that follow in the contemplative tradition of Isamu Noguchi. This exhibition features three large-scale sculptures—two portals and a buttressed wall, all made of both polished and unpolished granite. While handsome, the sculptures are also clunky, and are far less engaging than a series of photographs by the artist, on view in an adjacent room, of architectural details at Machu Picchu and Tikal. These shadowy pictures of open spaces with broad staircases and empty terraced altars succeed in evoking the sense of ritual and mystery that the sculptures aspire to but fail to achieve. Evidently, when it comes to the neutral indoor environment of a gallery Zimmerman is hamstrung. Through July 11. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.)

John Zinsser—Beautiful two-color paintings in which the paint has been methodically streaked, squeegeed, basted, and glazed. The processes by which they were made are an explicit part of their imagery, but those works are most interesting that most strongly suggest representational subject matter—canyon walls or the sky, for instance. Zinsser has a simple yet very sophisticated sense of light. Through June 30. (Koury, 89 Greene St.)

"Hand and Eye—Modelled Sculpture"—This show's rather faulty premise—that in recent decades the efficacy of sculpture has not been called into question in the same way that painting's has—ignores such developments as earth works, process art, and body art. But if one simply views this show as an attractive assembly of works by artists who make hand-modelled sculpture, then it is an amiable enough display. Particularly fine are Louise Bourgeois's labyrinthine form, which touches on organic, social, and scatological issues; Franz West's Oldenburg-like papier-mâché object, which was made in part with pages torn from an Austrian telephone directory; and Pier Consagra's kitschy glazed terra-cotta lamps, depicting an Arabian dancer—here female, there male—dramatically gesticulating to a low-wattage bulb. Through June 6. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

"Masquerade (Body Double)"—The theme of this quite fashionable exhibition is abstract-surreal biology. It presents four artists' works, including several of Lucas Samaras's famous Polaroid "Photo-Transformations" from 1973-1976, as well as Cibachromes by Jeanne

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Dunning, a painting and two drawings by the wonderful Lari Pittman, and two recent built-up lollipop-colored paintings by Matthew Weinstein, who seems to be going through a breakthrough phase and is getting very good indeed. Through May 30. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

"PERFORMANCE, VIDEO & FILM"—During regular gallery hours, videos and films—by such artists as Eleanor Antin, Liza Bear, Andrea Fraser, and Sharon Greytak—can be viewed on request. In "Thanatopsis," a recent tape starring Lydia Lunch and directed by Beth B., Lunch expresses despair over a world in which violence is inevitable. "Slavery is freedom and war is peace," she says in her monologue, echoing Orwell's "1984"; the piece is both soothing and depressing. In addition, the gallery is staging a series of performances (Wednesday evenings at 7 and Saturday afternoons at 4) by other artists. (There is no admission charge for the performances.) Through June 6. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

SHORT LIST—JENNIFER BOLANDE, Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through June 13); CHRISTOPHER BROWN, Thorp, 103 Prince St. (through June 20); JAMES BROWN, Castelli, 578 Broadway (through June 6); IAN DAVENPORT, Kasmin, 580 Broadway (through June 27); DAN FLAVIN, RubinSpangle, 395 West Broadway (through June 26); GEORGE GREEN, Meisel, 141 Prince St. (through May 30); JAN GROTH, Brown, 23 Watts St. (through June 6); PETER HALLEY, Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. (through June 27); ALFRED LESLIE, Flynn, 113 Crosby St. (through June 27); GLENN LIGON (through June 6) and JUDY PFAFF (through June 27), Protetch, 560 Broadway; JOHN LINDELL, Cugliani, 40 Wooster St. (through June 27); HUNG LIU, Steinbaum, 132 Greene St. (through June 27); ROBERT MORRIS, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through June 27); SUSAN ROTHENBERG, Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through May 30); EDWIN RUDA, Kelly, 591 Broadway (through June 23); HAROLD SHAPINSKY, Helander, 415 West Broadway (through May 30), and National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. (open daily, except Sundays, at noon; through June 27); KIKI SMITH, Fawbush, 76 Grand St. (through June 3); JIM WAID, Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St. (through June 13).

Sally Mann

PHOTOGRAPHY

THE more we look at Sally Mann's photographs of her children, the more we want to know about them. When we saw her exhibition at the Houk Friedman gallery (1094 Madison Avenue, at 82nd Street; through June 27), we found ourself asking the kinds of questions we often skip—questions concerning the photographer's methods and intentions. That's because a number of these photographs have an edge of sensuality, and even eroticism, to them—matters so poorly dealt with in our society that even to notice them can make one feel indecent. Mann's forthright treatment of her own children's behavior made us especially eager to know more about her aesthetics. It seems that Mann will sometimes go back and re-create with her kids a scene that, in the course of their daily lives, has presented itself as a potential photograph. Her pictures have qualities—of simultaneous consciousness and unconsciousness, the casual and the staged—that make them spellbinding.

Mann is telling stories as much as she's taking pictures, and, as the child psychiatrist Robert Coles observed in the *Times*—where he brilliantly compared her subjects with the children in the photographs of both Helen Levitt (now being shown at the Metropolitan Museum) and Bruce Davidson—what we find in her images is a tale of contemporary childhood that toys with the idea of innocence. One minute it's there, and a moment later Mann's daughter is smoking a candy cigarette as if it's anything but sugar. There's a photograph in the exhibition titled "Damaged Child." You may assume that the puffiness around the little girl's right eye was the result of physical violence until you learn that it was due to a gnat bite—which brings home how accustomed we've become to child abuse.

Ours is a society that specializes in taboos, so it is not surprising that Mann's provocative work of the past few years has caused some of those who exhibit or publish it a certain amount of anxiety, or that all sorts of accusations have been levelled at it. Will viewers continue to have the opportunity, as they do at Houk Friedman, to see a full selection of Mann's work? Let's hope so, because that's the only way this serious photographer will have a chance to be seriously understood.

GERTRUDE KÄSEBIER (1852-1934)—A small connoisseur's treat of a show, which highlights two of the strongest forces in Käsebier's vision: narrative photographs of domestic life, and portraits of her male colleagues, many of them significant figures in the history of photography—Clarence White, Edward Steichen, Baron Adolf De Meyer, and Alfred Stieglitz. And Käsebier's portraits of Native Americans have a power and a directness that we've often found lacking in Edward Curtis's pictures on this topic. Through July 14. (Museum of Modern Art.)

HELEN LEVITT—New York finally has a show of Levitt's work which is big enough to give viewers a true sense of this photographer's important contribution to the medium. Levitt's name has become virtually synonymous with New York street photography of the thirties and forties, though in fact she has stayed with this subject right up to the present—and here you can see both the changes and the continuity in her vision. Through June 28. (Metropolitan Museum.)

SHORT LIST—DMITRI BALTERMANTS, International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through June 21); ADAM FÜSS, Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 13); FRANK GOHLKE, Parrasch, 588 Broadway (through May 30); ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through June 20); ZOE LEONARD, Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through June 3); ARNOLD NEWMAN, Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. (through May 30); CINDY SHERMAN, Horan, 35 E. 67th St. (open Mondays, through June 12); LORNA SIMPSON, Baer, 476 Broome St. (through June 20); SANDY SKOGLUND, Borden, 560 Broadway (through June 19); ANDY WARHOL, Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through June 26).

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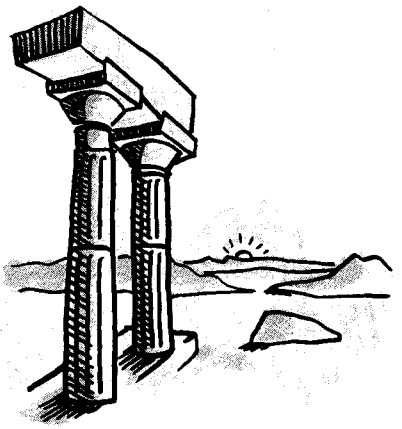
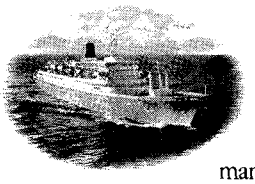


PONDER ANCIENT RUINS OVER CRÈME BRÛLÉE.



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CUNARD

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MUSIC

THE French composers for whom life has been easiest have been the ones who regarded German music with rage, with bemused incomprehension, or with a fine, distant appreciation. Closer involvement can mean trouble; those who really absorb Bach or Beethoven or Wagner or Schoenberg barter away some portion of their birthright of Gallic ease. (Couperin, Auber, Debussy, and Poulenc belong in the first category, and Berlioz and Boulez in the second.) Frank Martin's birthright was mixed: by heritage French Huguenot but by birth Swiss, he grew up with German music, breathed and drank it, and had to exert some effort to get his own style out from under it. He was more like the composers in the second group, an anxious creator full of questions and searchings. One hears his name rather more than his music nowadays; though he was still busily composing up to the time of his death, in 1974, he had assumed a place to one side of the main currents of contemporary music.

We don't know much Martin, but find some of what we do know vivid in texture, thematically cogent, and harmonically appealing—in short, concisely and intelligently composed. New Grove calls his oratorio "Le Vin Herbé" the "first work in his mature style." What better way to establish his own un-German voice than to address the story of Tristan and Isolde with the reticence of the oratorio form, with an orchestra of seven strings and piano, with solos for lyrical voices? We haven't encountered "Le Vin Herbé" in performance before; I Cantori di New York are to present it on May 30 at St. Peter's Church, in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the work's first complete performance.

OPERA

Flying Horse Honan Opera Troupe—Singer Wang Hai-ling will be featured in several operatic scenes. (Taipei Theatre, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 48th St. 373-1850. May 28-30 at 7:30 and May 31 at 2.)

"Photo-Op"—A staging of Conrad Cummings' operatic swipe at presidential campaigns. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. May 28-31 at 7:30. Through June 14.)

Russell Currie Operas—Concert performances of two of the composer's chamber operas—"Caliban" (in its première) and "The Cask of Amontillado." (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. May 28-30 at 8. For information about tickets, call 330-8772.)

Il Piccolo Teatro dell'Opera—Presenting Benjamin Britten's miracle play "Noye's Fludde"; with bass Wilbur Pauley and mezzo-soprano Lila Ammons as Mr. and Mrs. Noye, and more than a hundred public-school children playing the other parts (including an arkful of animals). (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. May 29 at 8, and May 30 at 1 and 3. For information about tickets, call 1-718 643-7775.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Presenting Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem," a passionate outcry against bellicosity. Conducted by Kurt Masur (with assistance from Samuel Wong); with the New York Choral Artists, the American Boychoir, and soloists Yvonne Kenny (soprano), Jerry Hadley (tenor), and David Wilson-Johnson (baritone). (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. May 25 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Benjamin Britten
(Il Piccolo Teatro dell'Opera and the New York Philharmonic)

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducts the American première of Vivaldi's "La Sena Festeggiante," a cantata written in homage to Louis XV, in which the River Seine (in the person of bass Ara Berberian) carries on a discourse with the Golden Age (sung by soprano Pamela Myers) and Virtue (mezzo-soprano Susan Shafer); with the Metropolitan Singers/The Greek Choral Society and narrator Lynn Redgrave. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 27 at 8.)

New York Debut Orchestra—Roberto de Barros conducts music by Bach, Boccherini, Bellini, and Brahms. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. May 27 at 8. For information about tickets, call 307-1990.)

I Cantori di New York—Mark Shapiro directs Frank Martin's oratorio "Le Vin Herbé." (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. May 30 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts Honegger's Symphony No. 2, Mozart's Symphony No. 39, Bruch's First Violin Concerto (featuring Elmar Oliveira), and the première of Henri Lazarof's Clarinet Concerto (with David Singer). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. May 30 at 8 and May 31 at 3.)

"Concert of Remembrance"—Steven Richman conducts the Harmonie Ensemble and various soloists in music commemorating the Holocaust, including a quartet by Victor Ullman and a trio by Joel Spiegelman. (Temple Emanu-el, Fifth Ave. at 65th St. May 31 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Central City Chorus—Charles Pilling directs Purcell's "Welcome to All the Pleasures" (one of the composer's lesser-known odes for St. Cecilia's Day), as well as a concert performance of his opera "Dido and Aeneas," with an accompanying ensemble of period instruments. The soloists in the opera include sopranos Alexandra Montano and Rita Lilly, countertenor Jeffrey Dooley, and tenor Patrick Romano. (Central Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 64th St. 838-0808. June 1 at 8.)

RECITALS

VineyardMusicke—The period-instrument chamber group performs music from colonial Brazil, including two symphonies by the mulatto priest José Maurício Nunes Garcia (musical director of Rio de Janeiro Cathedral and, beginning in 1808, of Dom João VI's royal chapel) and sacred music by Sigismund Ritter von Neukomm (an Austrian-born pupil of Haydn, who lived in Rio for five years in the early nineteenth century). (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. May 26 at 8.)

Jon Gillock—The organist performs Messiaen's "Livre du Saint Sacrement." (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. May 27 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Russian Musical Arts Society—May 27 at 8: Works by Shostakovich, Ussachevsky, Vladimir Ryabov, Victor Copytsko, and Eero Richmond. (Church of the Good Shepherd, 240 E. 31st St. Admission by contribution.). . . ¶ May 31 at 3: Substantially the same program, but with several of the composers on hand to discuss their works. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Admission by contribution.)

Bargemusic—Oboist Peggy Pearson and pianist Phillip Bush perform Saint-Saëns' Oboe Sonata; violist Paul Neubauer joins them for Charles-Martin Loeffler's "Two Rhapsodies." The concert also includes Dvořák's Piano Quartet (Op. 87). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 28 at 7:30 and May 31 at 4.)

Barros Classical Consort—An all-Beethoven concert that comprises the "Pathétique" Sonata (played on fortepiano by Max Barros), three works for piano trio, and the song cycle "An die Ferne Geliebte" (featuring tenor Robert White). (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. May 28 at 8. For information about tickets, call 307-1990.)

Maya Beiser—In her New York début recital the cellist performs sonatas by Debussy and Shostakovich, in addition to works by Janáček (his "Pohádka"), Lutoslawski, Joaquín Nin, and David Lang; with pianist Christopher Oldfather. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. May 28 at 8.)

New Renaissance Chamber Artists—Numerous guests join the ensemble in music by David Amram, John Bergamo, Mark Grant (a première), Copland (his Duo for Flute and Piano), and Crumb (his "Eleven Echoes of Autumn"). (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 28 at 8.)

New York Chamber Ensemble—Steven Rogers Radcliffe leads several works by Copland, as well as Michael Ruszczynski's "Lyric Concertino" (featuring oboist Matthew Dine) and Joan Tower's Flute Concerto (with Susan Rotholz as soloist). (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. May 29 at 8.)

New York Festival of Song—Presenting Paul Bowles' "A Picnic Cantata," and André Messager's "L'Amour Masqué." (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. May 31 at 5.)

Anna Patrick Singer—In addition to songs and arias by Griffes, Barber, Carter, and Bolcom, the soprano will perform the New York première of John Greer's "A Sarah Binks Songbook," a cycle of songs composed to versifications by Paul Hiebert's fictional "Sweet Songstress of Saskatchewan," whose tastes—as connoisseurs of poetastery will gleefully recall—ran to train wrecks, agricultural-equipment accidents, and the untimely demise of infants. Pianist Eric Malson will assist. (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800. May 31 at 8:30.)

Asako Urushihara and Miki Maruta—The violinist and the koto player collaborate in a recital. Ms. Urushihara plays (among other works) Chausson's "Poème" and sonatas by Strauss and Vivaldi; Ms. Maruta performs traditional koto pieces as well as the première of Lowell Liebermann's "Fantasy for Bass Koto." (Steinway Hall, 109 W. 57th St. June 1 at 7. For information about tickets, call 369-3911.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Presenting the première of Anthony Davis's "Litany of Sins" in addition to Ravel's Sonatine (for flute, viola, and harp) and Beethoven's Septet (Op. 20). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. June 2 at 8.)

North/South Consonance—Presenting music by Stefan Wolpe and composers he influenced: Manuel Enríquez, Max Lifchitz, Raoul Pleskow, John Thow, and Nils Vigeland. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. June 2 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

New York Consort of Viols and Zephyrus—The string ensemble and the vocal quintet, plus vihuelist Michael Jaffee, perform sixteenth-century Spanish music. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. June 3 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Heidi Skok—The soprano performs Barber's "Knoxville: Summer of 1915," in addition to songs by Dowland, Obradors, and Argento; with pianist Levering Rothfuss and classical guitarist Robert DiCello (who will also perform solo-guitar works). A benefit concert. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. June 3 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-718 526-0722.)

John Kelly—The performance artist will assume the persona of Dagmar Onassis, mythical Greek-American diva, to offer a program of songs and arias that rank near the top of the scale of heightened emotion; with pianist Fernando Torm-Tohá. (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800. June 3 at 8.)

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Cher

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Cher—It's hard to imagine that anyone goes to a Cher concert for the *music* (except for some of the silly, redolent oldies). America's bare-bottomed sweetheart represents a particularly accessible kind of celebrity: her gaudy vulgarity has a friendliness and nonchalance that shortens the distance between the famous and the populace. What other star combines blunt humor, endearing self-doubt, and exhibitionism on such a titanic scale? (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. May 27-31 at 8.)

Indigo Girls—Once you get past the cringe factor—a few of their songs are unbearably earnest and sappy—the Georgia-based duo of Amy Ray and Emily Saliers rewards you with some of the best sweet-but-not-mellow folk-rock tunes around. They have a few near-classics in their catalogue (the haunting "History of Us" comes to mind), and their new album, "Rites of Passage," is almost completely wonderful. The New Jersey rocker Matthew Sweet, whose garage-pop album "Girlfriend" deservedly wound up on many Best-of-1991 lists, opens what should be an extremely palatable concert. (Beacon, Broadway at 74th St. June 1-4 at 8. For information about tickets, call 496-7070.)

Genesis—This trio of bland English nice guys—starring the ne plus ultra of bland English niceness, Phil Collins—is the commercially stupendous remnant of one of the archetypal art-rock bands of the seventies. (Find someone with a complete collection of Genesis albums, and you'll also find piles of Yes, Pink Floyd, Electric Light Orchestra, and Emerson, Lake and Palmer.) Most of the fans crowding the stadiums on this American tour will be coming to hear the passion-free eighties hits, as well as selections from the inevitably platinum new album, "We Can't Dance." The band is known for the technological astuteness of its live shows; this time around, hardware lovers will be appeased by three enormous Jumbotron video screens mounted above the stage. (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. 1-201 935-3900. June 2-3 at 8.)

Lou Reed—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 26-27 at 8.

Les Paul and His Trio—Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. May 27 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.

Wynton Marsalis—Presenting the première of "In This House/On This Morning." (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. May 27 at 9.)

Sabah Fakhri Ensemble—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 29 at 8.

"On Time"—A concert with Max Roach, Panama Francis, and the Dirty Dozen Brass Band. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. May 30 at 8.)

Percussion Concert—Glen Velez, Trichy Sankaran, Shankar, Orlando (Puntilla) Rios, LadyGourd Sangoma, and Adam Plack. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 30 at 8.)

"Songs to Jerusalem"—With the National Jewish Chorale and Orchestra. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 31 at 2:30.)

Rory Stuart—With Glenn Wilson. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. May 31 at 7. Admission by contribution.)

Nelson Rangell—Central Park Zoo, Fifth Ave. at 64th St. June 1 at 7. For information about tickets, call 861-6030.

Jessie Mae Hemphill and Lonnie Pitchford—Winter Garden. June 3 at 7:30.

Reggie Workman—With Milford Graves and Jason Hwang. (Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway. June 3 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Carnegie Hall Folk Festival—May 27: "The Family Tradition," with Sid and Stephen Selvidge, Turner and Lynn Foddrell, and the Bill Sky Family. . . . ¶ May 29: "Workin' in a Coal Mine," with Hazel Dickens, Nomonde Ngubo, and the Rabbit Ridge Pea Pickers. . . . ¶ June 2: "Workin' on the Railroad," with Charlie Chin, the Gandy Dancers, U. Utah Phillips, and Robin and Linda Williams. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Concerts at 8. Through June 12.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the Milwaukee Brewers, May 25 at 1.

Mets—Vs. the Cincinnati Reds, May 25-27 at 7:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the Atlanta Braves, May 29 at 7:40 and May 30-31 at 1:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the San Francisco Giants, June 1-2 at 7:40. (The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000; and the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Stars in the Alley"—On May 27 at noon, in anticipation of the upcoming Tony awards, stars of this year's nominated Broadway shows will perform musical numbers on a makeshift stage in Shubert Alley (near the Shubert Theatre, 225 W. 44th St.), with piano accompaniment. Performers will include Gregory Hines, Jodi Benson, Harry Groener, Spiro Malas, and Sophie Hayden.

Sing-Along—The New York Revels present an evening of spring carols, pub songs, sea chanteys, canons, and rounds. (Central Park Arsenal, Fifth Ave. at 64th St. May 27 at 6. For information about tickets, call 431-1088.)

Ur-Walt—Daniel Barshay portrays Walt Whitman giving a first-person account of Civil War battles. The backdrop will be a slide show. (Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Sq. S. May 27 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

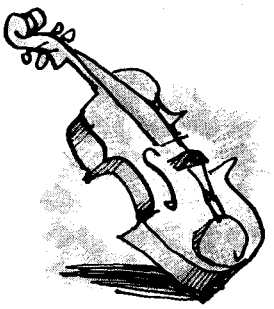
Screenings—A number of films have recently been released from the Soviet state archives, and segments of them will be screened over several days at Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. (June 1, June 3-4, and June 10, all at 6:30. For information, call 362-8719.)

Let's Talk About Dance—May 31 at 3: Bill T. Jones and Pearl Lang. (Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. For information about tickets, call 399-3357.). . . ¶ June 2 at 6: Darci Kistler. (Alice Tully Hall. For information about tickets, call 875-5440.)

Readings—May 28 at 6:30: James Purdy, Lynne Tillman, and Robert Coover read fairy tales. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ May 28 at 7: Joan Didion reads from her new book. (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ May 29 at 8: Cynthia Heimel reads from her own prose. (Tower Books, 383 Lafayette St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ June 1 at 8: Sue Grafton and Walter Mosley read from their own detective novels. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. For information about tickets, call 645-0905.)

Memorandum—The Washington Square Outdoor Art Show continues on May 30-31, from noon to sundown.

CLASSICAL MUSIC CRUISES



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: Through May 28: (Separate admissions) "Edward II" (directed by Derek Jarman).; and "Mississippi Masala" (†). From May 29: "Pepi, Luci, Bom" (1980, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura.
Theatre 2: "Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).
Theatre 3: "The Waterdance" (Neal Jimenez and Michael Steinberg), with Eric Stoltz, Wesley Snipes, William Forsythe, Helen Hunt, and Elizabeth Peña.
Theatre 4: "Zentropa" (Lars Von Trier, in English and German), with Jean-Marc Barr, Barbara Sukowa, and Eddie Constantine.
Theatre 5: "Night on Earth" (†).
Theatre 6: "Proof" (Jocelyn Moorhouse).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
May 25: Theatre closed.
May 26-28: "Confidentially Yours" (1984, François Truffaut; in French), with Fanny Ardant and Jean-Louis Trintignant; and "The Man Who Loved Women" (1977, Truffaut; in French), with Charles Denner, Brigitte Fossey, Nelly Borgeaud, and Leslie Caron.
From May 29: "Cousin Bobby" (†); and "Pictures from a Revolution" (Susan Meiselas, Richard P. Rogers, and Alfred Guzzetti).

Newman Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"The Enchantment" (Shunichi Nagasaki; in Japanese).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 3: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Poison Ivy" (Katt Shea Ruben), with Tom Skerritt, Sara Gilbert, Cheryl Ladd, and Drew Barrymore.
Theatre 2: "K2" (†).
Theatre 3: "Casablanca" (1942, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, and Claude Rains.
Theatre 4: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 5: "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 6: "Deep Cover" (†).
Theatre 7: "Incident at Oglala" (†).

Cinema Village 12th Street, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"The Good Woman of Bangkok" (Dennis O'Rourke).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Toto le Heros" (Jaco Van Dormael; in French), with Michel Bouquet.
Theatre 2: "Cabeza de Vaca" (Nicolas Echevarria; in Spanish).
Theatre 3: "Daughters of the Dust" (1991, Julie Dash).
Theatre 4: Through May 28: "The Favor, the Watch, and the Very Big Fish" (Ben Lewin), with Bob Hoskins. From May 29: "Cold Heaven" (Nicolas Roeg), with Theresa Russell, James Russo, Talia Shire, and Mark Marmon.
Theatre 5: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: "Othello" (†).
Theatre 7: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin.

Cinema Village 3rd Avenue, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through May 28: "The Fourth Animation Celebration: The Movie."
From May 29: "Castle of Cagliostro," an animated film.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 3: "White Sands" (†).
Theatre 4: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 5: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 6: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Playboys" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Alien3" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 18.

"Shadows" (playing June 1, at the 8th St. Playhouse) was John Cassavetes' favorite Cassavetes movie. You don't have to be interested in Cassavetes, or improvisation, or the roots of the New York film style that flowered with Martin Scorsese, to find "Shadows" funny and moving. You just have to be open to a jumpy, hip, tormented form of dramatic poetry (Dwight Macdonald called it "lyrical realism") influenced in equal measure by New York acting classes and jazz. Working over a three-year period (1957-60) and on a forty-thousand-dollar budget, Cassavetes took off from scenes he'd developed when directing the city's Variety Arts Studio. Concocting a plot that fit his multiracial group of actors, and coaxing them to summon the thoughts and feelings of art-minded New Yorkers (circa '57), he captured the meaning of the words "identity crisis."

Hugh Hurd plays a bluesy musician who sinks to introducing a chorus line in a Philadelphia dive; Ben Carruthers is Hugh's kid brother, a post-adolescent loafer; Lelia Goldoni is their sister, a tragicomic quester who thinks life is eluding her. (The characters take the first names of the actors.) The siblings are black, but Ben and Lelia can pass for white. The film's relative looseness about racial identities makes the moments when race becomes an issue all the more powerful. Cassavetes handles the emotional intricacies of black-white friendships and love affairs with a subtlety and sympathy that dwarf Spike Lee's "Jungle Fever."

The actors fill the movie with nervy, prickly textures. Goldoni is particularly memorable—she has the face of a sometimes ravaged, sometimes aroused cherub. Hurd gives doggedness a good name, and Rupert Crosse is wonderful as his agent-manager. (Rupe is like a captain who's a little anxious about going down with his ship.) This team's professional disappointment complicates their tenacious friendship, but their scenes still have a steady warmth. The title doesn't allude only to Ben and Lelia's racial ambiguity. It also refers to characters living in the shadow of people they hope or fear they might become.

Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 3: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin.
Theatre 4: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 3: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Far and Away" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"White Sands" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Incident at Oglala" (†).
Theatre 2: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin.

Crown Gotham, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"My Cousin Vinny" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"A Midnight Clear" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 2: "Deep Cover" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "The Waterdance" (Neal Jimenez and Michael Steinberg), with Eric Stoltz, Wesley Snipes, William Forsythe, Helen Hunt, and Elizabeth Peña,
Theatre 2: "Far and Away" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Playboys" (†).
Theatre 3: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish).

Art East Cinema, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
Through May 28: "Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).
From May 29: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Beethoven" (†); and (evenings only) "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 2: "Alien3" (†).
Theatre 3: "Alien3" (†).
Theatre 4: "City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze.
Theatre 5: "Poison Ivy" (Katt Shea Ruben), with Tom Skerritt, Sara Gilbert, Cheryl Ladd, and Drew Barrymore.
Theatre 6: "Alien3" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Player" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Casablanca" (1942, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, and Claude Rains.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Wayne's World" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Alien3" (†).
Theatre 2: "Far and Away" (†).

Loews Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-24[illegible])
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 4: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 5: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 6: "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 7: (Matinées only) "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "A Midnight Clear" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 28: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin. From May 29: "Sister Act" (Emile Ardolino), with Whoopi Goldberg, Maggie Smith, Kathy Najimy, and Harvey Keitel.

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WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through June 2: "Once Upon a Time in China" (directed by Tsui Hark; in Cantonese, with Chinese and English subtitles). From June 3: "Wisecracks" (†).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: Through June 2: "Titicut Follies" (1967, Fred Wiseman), a documentary made at the state prison for the criminally insane at Bridgewater, Massachusetts. From June 3: "Once Upon a Time in China" (Tsui Hark; in Cantonese, with Chinese and English subtitles).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Alien³" (†).
Theatre 2: "Alien³" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 2: "Far and Away" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "A Midnight Clear" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 28: "Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian). From May 29: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese).
Theatre 3: "A Woman's Tale" (Paul Cox), with Sheila Florance.
Theatre 4: (Separate admissions) "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French and Polish); and "American Dream" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Far and Away" (†).
Theatre 2: "My Cousin Vinny" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 28: "Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin. From May 29: "Sister Act" (Emile Ardolino), with Whoopi Goldberg, Maggie Smith, Kathy Najimy, and Harvey Keitel.
Theatre 4: "Alien³" (†).
Theatre 5: "Alien³" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 8: "Far and Away" (†).
Theatre 9: "A Midnight Clear" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Deep Cover" (†).
Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Beethoven" (†); and (evenings only) "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin, Brendan Fraser, and Megan Ward.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "My Cousin Vinny" (†).
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 3: "Beethoven" (†).
Theatre 4: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (Jon Avnet).
Theatre 5: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 6: "City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Far and Away" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"K2" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
Through May 28: "A Woman's Tale" (Paul Cox), with Sheila Florance.
From May 29: "Cold Heaven" (Nicolas Roeg), with Theresa Russell, James Russo, Talia Shire, and Mark Marmon.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "The Favor, the Watch, and the Very Big Fish" (Ben Lewin), with Bob Hoskins.
Theatre 2: "Mississippi Masala" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Howards End" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Where Angels Fear to Tread" (Charles Sturridge), with Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis, Rupert Graves, Giovanni Guidelli, Barbara Jefford, and Helen Mirren.

Loews Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Encino Man" (Les Mayfield), with Sean Astin, Brendan Fraser, and Megan Ward.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Night on Earth" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: Through May 28: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese). From May 29: "The Adjuster" (Atom Egoyan).
Theatre 2: "Adam's Rib" (Viatcheslav Krishtofovitch; in Russian).
Theatre 3: "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Far and Away" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 4: Through May 28: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer. From May 29: "Sister Act" (Emile Ardolino), with Whoopi Goldberg, Maggie Smith, Kathy Najimy, and Harvey Keitel.
Theatre 5: "The Player" (†).
Theatre 6: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Alien³" (†).
Theatre 2: "Alien³" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Poison Ivy" (Katt Shea Ruben), with Tom Skerritt, Sara Gilbert, Cheryl Ladd, and Drew Barrymore.
Theatre 2: "My Cousin Vinny" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Alien³" (†).
Theatre 2: "Alien³" (†).
Theatre 3: "Alien³" (†).
Theatre 4: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 5: "Deep Cover" (†).
Theatre 6: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).
Theatre 7: "Lethal Weapon 3" (†).

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through May 28: "Heavy Metal."
From May 29: "Sister Act" (directed by Emile Ardolino), with Whoopi Goldberg, Maggie Smith, Kathy Najimy, and Harvey Keitel.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 28: "Passed Away" (Charlie Peters), with Bob Hoskins. From May 29: "Heavy Metal."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 2: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer.

REVIVAL HOUSES

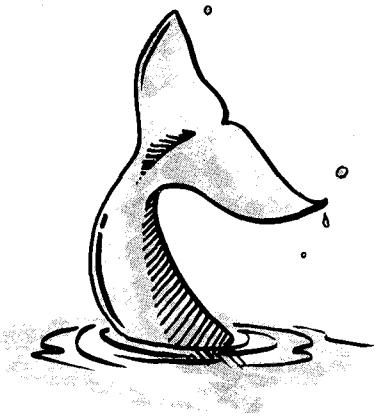
Le Cinematographe, 15 Vandam St. (675-4680)
"Frida Kahlo: A Ribbon Around a Bomb" (directed by Ken Mandel), a documentary.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through May 26: "Hook" (Steven Spielberg), with Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Julia Roberts, and Bob Hoskins; and "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen" (1989, Terry Gilliam), with John Neville.
May 27-28: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English), with Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider; and "Lolita" (1962, Stanley Kubrick), with Sue Lyon, James Mason, Peter Sellers, and Shelley Winters.
May 29-30: "Eating" (1991, Henry Jaglom); and "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
May 31: "A Woman Under the Influence" (1974, John Cassavetes), with Peter Falk and Gena Rowlands; and "Faces" (1968, Cassavetes), with John Marley, Rowlands, Lynn Carlin, and Seymour Cassel.
June 1: "A Woman Under the Influence"; and "Shadows" (see page 16).
June 2: "A Woman Under the Influence"; and "The Killing of a Chinese Bookie" (1976, Cassavetes), with Ben Gazzara.
June 3: "A Woman Under the Influence"; and "Opening Night" (John Cassavetes).

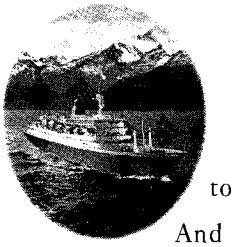
Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
May 25-26: "Long Pants" (1927, Frank Capra; silent), with Harry Langdon; and a program of short films Capra made at the Mack Sennet studios. May 25 at 7 and 9:20, "The Donovan Affair" (1929, Capra), with Jack Holt.
May 27-28: "The Younger Generation" (1929, Frank Capra), with Lina Basquette and Ricardo Cortez; and "The Way of the Strong" (1928, Capra), with Mitchell Lewis.
From May 29: "The Proud Ones" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
May 25: "Hour of the Wolf" (1968, Ingmar

SAGAFJORD'S ALASKA



A BELUGA INTERRUPTS MORNING TEA.



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CUNARD

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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Bergman; in Swedish), with Max von Sydow and Liv Ullmann; and "The Passion of Anna" (1970, Bergman; in Swedish), with Ullmann, Bibi Andersson, von Sydow, and Erland Josephson.

May 26: "The Big House" (1930, George Hill), with Wallace Beery, Chester Morris, and Robert Montgomery; and "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang" (1932, Mervyn LeRoy), with Paul Muni.

May 27: "Funny Face" (1957, Stanley Donen), with Audrey Hepburn, Fred Astaire, Kay Thompson, and Michel Auclair; and "Sabrina"(1954, Billy Wilder), with Humphrey Bogart, Hepburn, and William Holden.

May 28: "The African Queen" (†); and "Summertime" (1955, David Lean), with Katharine Hepburn, Rossano Brazzi, Isa Miranda, and Darren McGavin.

May 29-30: "Taxi Driver" (1976, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, Cybill Shepherd, and Jodie Foster; and "Raging Bull" (1980, Scorsese), with De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, and Joe Pesci.

May 31: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919, Robert Wiene; a German silent film), with Werner Krauss, Conrad Veidt, Lil Dagover, and Fredrich Feher; and "M" (†).

June 1: "La Rupture" (1970, Claude Chabrol; in French), with Stéphane Audran, Jean-Pierre Cassel, and Michel Bouquet; and "Ophélia" (1962, Chabrol; in French), with André Jocelyn and Juliette Mayniel.

June 2: "Midnight Cowboy" (1969, John Schlesinger), with Dustin Hoffman, Jon Voight, and Brenda Vaccaro; and "The Graduate" (1967, Mike Nichols), with Anne Bancroft, Hoffman, Katharine Ross, William Daniels, Elizabeth Wilson, and Murray Hamilton.

June 3: "Topaz" (1969, Alfred Hitchcock), with Frederick Stafford; and "Torn Curtain" (1966, Hitchcock), with Paul Newman, Julie Andrews, Lila Kedrova, Tamara Toumanova, and Ludwig Donath.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—May 25 at 2 and May 28 at 2:30: "Arsenal" (1929, directed by Alexander Dovzhenko; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 25 at 3 and May 26 at 6: "Your Money or Your Life" (1982, Henning Carlsen; in Danish). . . . ¶ May 25 at 5: "Death Ray" (1925, Lev Kuleshov; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 25 at 6 and May 29 at 3: "The Wolf at the Door" (1986, Carlsen; in English, with Italian subtitles), with Donald Sutherland and Max von Sydow. . . . ¶ May 26 at 2:30: "Benya Krik" (1926, Vladimir Vilner). . . . ¶ May 26 at 3: "Oh, To Be on the Bandwagon" (1972, Carlsen; in Danish). . .,; ¶ May 26 at 6: "Mechanics of the Brain" (1925, V. I. Pudovkin; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 28 at 3 and 6: "Dancing with the Incas: Huayno Music of Peru" (1991, John Cohen), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 28 at 6: "By the Law" (1926, Kuleshov; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 29 at 2:30 and May 31 at 2: "Storm Over Asia" (1928, Pudovkin; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 29 at 6: "The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty" (1927, Esther Shub; a Russian silent film), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 29 at 6: "A Happy Divorce" (1975, Carlsen), with Jean Rochefort, Bulle Ogier, and André Dussollier. . . . ¶ May 30 at 2: "Potemkin" (1925, Sergei Eisenstein; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 30 at 2:30: "Hunger" (1966, Carlsen; in Swedish), with Per Oscarsson and Gunnel Lindblom. . . . ¶ May 30 at 5: "The Man with the Movie Camera" (1929, Dziga Vertov; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 30 at 5: "Did Somebody Laugh?" (1978, Carlsen; in Danish). . . . ¶ May 31 at 2:30: "Dilemma" (1964, Carlsen) and "Old People" (1961, Carlsen; in Danish). . . . ¶ May 31 at 5 and June 2 at 6: "New Babylon" (1929, Grigori Kozintsev; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 31 at 5: "The Cats" (1964, Carlsen; in Danish). . . . ¶ June 1 at 2:30: "Old and New" (1929, Eisenstein and Grigori Alexandrov; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ June 1 at 6: "Symphony of the Donbas" (1930, Vertov; in Russian), a documentary. . . . ¶ June 2 at 2:30: "Salt for Scanetia" (1930, Mikail Kalatozov; in Russian), a documentary.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—May 25 at 2, 4, and 6, and May 26 at 6, 8, and 10: "The Stranger" (†). . . . ¶ May 25 at 8 and May 26 at 2: "Don Giovanni" (1979, Joseph Losey; in Italian), with Ruggero Raimondi. . . . ¶ May 27 at 2 and 6:30 and May 28 at 4:15 and 8:45: "They Call Us Misfits" (1968, Stefan Jarl) and "Memento Mori" (1991, Jarl). . . . ¶ May 27 at 4:15 and 8:45 and May 28 at 2 and 6:30: "A Respectable Life" (1979, Jarl). . . . ¶ May 29 at 2, May 30 at 4, and May 31 at 8: "Transform Sweden" (1974, Jarl) and "Nature's Revenge" (1983, Jarl). . . . ¶ May 29 at 3:45, May 30 at 2, and May 31 at 3:45: "The Soul Is Greater Than the World" (1985, Jarl). . . . ¶ May 29 at 6, 8 and 10, May 30 at 6, 8, and 10, May 31 at 2 and 9:45, June 1 at 4 and 8, June 2 at 8:45, and June 3 at 2: "Painting the Town" (1992, Andrew Behar). . . . ¶ May 31 at 5:45, June 2 at 2 and 6:30, and June 3 at 3:45: "Good People" (1990, Jarl). . . . ¶ June 1 at 2 and 6 and June 2 at 4:15: "The Threat" (1987, Jarl) and "Javna—Reindeer Herdsman in the Year 2000" (1991, Jarl).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—June 3 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Guy de Maupassant" (1982, Michel Drach; in French), with Claude Brasseur, Simon Signoret, Miou-Miou, and Jean Carmet.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—May 30 at 3 and 7: "High and Low" (1963, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune.

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 783-6501)—May 30 at 2: "It Happened in Brooklyn" (1947, Richard Whorf), with Frank Sinatra, Kathryn Grayson, Jimmy Durante, Peter Lawford, and Gloria Grahame. . . . ¶ May 31 at 2: "Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (1983, Spike Lee); and "Metropolitan Avenue" (1985, Christine Noschese).

IN BRIEF

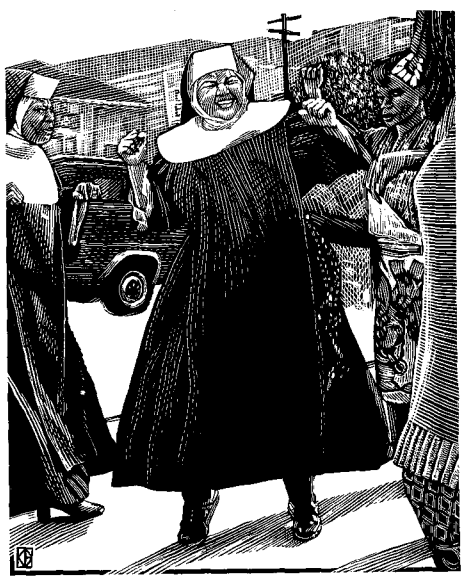
SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

The African Queen (1951)—An inspired piece of casting brought Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn together. This is a comedy, a love story, and a tale of adventure, and it is one of the most charming and entertaining movies ever made. The director, John Huston, said that the comedy was not present either in the novel by C. S. Forester or in the original screenplay by James Agee, John Collier, and himself, but that it grew out of the relationship of Hepburn and Bogart, who were just naturally funny when they worked together. Hepburn has revealed that the picture wasn't going well until Huston came up with the inspiration that she should think of Rosie as Mrs. Roosevelt. After that, Bogart and Hepburn played together with an ease and humor that makes their love affair—the mating of a forbidding, ironclad spinster and a tough, gin-soaked riverboat captain—seem not only inevitable, but perfect. The story, set in central Africa in 1914, is so convincingly acted that you may feel a bit jarred at the end; after the lovers have brought the boat, the African Queen, over dangerous rapids to torpedo a German battleship, Huston seems to stop taking the movie seriously. With Robert Morley as Hepburn's missionary brother, and Peter Bull. Cinematography by Jack Cardiff. Bogart's performance took the Academy Award for Best Actor. (Peter Viertel, who worked on the dialogue while the company was on location in Africa, wrote "White Hunter, Black Heart"—o ne of the best of all moviemaking novels—about his experiences with Huston.) —P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 28.)

Alien³—With Sigourney Weaver, directed by David Fincher. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Bay Cinema, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

American Dream—Barbara Kopple's documentary, about a strike in a Minnesota meatpacking plant, is a lucid and unfussy piece of movie journalism which manages to be as complexly affecting as a great novel. The story that she tells here is a terrifying one. The workers at the Austin, Minnesota, plant of Geo. A. Hormel & Company decide to go on strike on August 17, 1985, rather than accept a rollback of their wages and benefits. The union, Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, is led by a militant president, Jim Guyette, and a fiery free-lance consultant, Ray Rogers. Together, Guyette and Rogers create a terrific spirit of energy and resolve in the rank and file. But Lewie Anderson, a veteran negotiator for the international union, thinks that their strategy is "doomed." As the strike wears on, our reactions to what we're seeing become more volatile. Our hearts are with the pumped-up rank and file of P-9, but our heads, increasingly (and surprisingly), are with the pragmatic Anderson: his analysis of the local's chances against the company proves accurate in virtually every particular. The movie embodies a kind of tragic understanding of American life—tragic in the original and the fullest sense, in which the spectacle of unspeakable calamity produces pity and terror and then an unforeseeable and penetrating clarity. This is a masterpiece of social art. Academy Award for best documentary in 1991.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/23/92.) (Quad Cinema.)



Whoopi Goldberg and Kathy Najimy in "Sister Act"

Basic Instinct—A vicious, grindingly manipulative urban mystery that uses a thick atmosphere of S & M kinkiness to distract the audience from the story's thinness and inanity. Michael Douglas plays a cop with a "dark side." Sharon Stone plays a rich, beautiful bisexual novelist who is the prime suspect in a murder case. He falls in love with her, and the two of them breathe heavily through the rest of the picture. Stone has a few bright moments early on. But our basic instinct as we watch Douglas's strenuous grimaces of sexual transport is to flee the theatre. And the mystery is so ineptly constructed that it's not much fun trying to work out the solution. We sense that the screenwriter, Joe Eszterhas, and the director, Paul Verhoeven, don't have any respect for the genre—that they're too jaded to care about anything but giving us enough voyeuristic jolts to keep us awake. When the picture is over, we realize that the only suspense that it has produced effectively is a weird kind of ideological suspense. Will the movie take its smarmy misogyny all the way, or will it pull back in the end? It goes all the way. Also with George Dzundza and Jeanne Tripplehorn; there's a very peculiar cameo by Dorothy Malone.—T.R. (4/6/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Gemini,

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Loews Orpheum VII, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Beauty and the Beast—It's got storytelling vigor and clarity, bright, eclectic animation, and a frisky musical wit. In this Disney version of the fairy tale, Belle (the voice of Paige O'Hara) is a book-reading French provincial girl—a virtuous sort of Mademoiselle Bovary. She dreams of a Prince Charming but gets more than she bargains for when she becomes hostage to the buffalolike Beast (the surprisingly orotund Robby Benson). Underneath his fang-gnashing glower, he's a prisoner of adolescence—unlike Peter Pan, he wants to grow up. He's the opposite of Belle's lunkheaded village suitor, Gaston (Richard White), a narcissistic macho man. Throughout, the Howard Ashman–Alan Menken score is clever and fluid in the best Lerner and Loewe manner, with flashes of oddball humor that keep everything light and bouncy. (Gaston's theme song trumps "C'est Moi," from "Camelot.") There's a great cast of supporting utensils at the Beast's enchanted castle, led by Jerry Orbach in an ebullient vocal turn as the Chevalier-like candleholder, Lumiere. David Ogden Stiers is Cogsworth, the mantel clock; Angela Lansbury is Mrs. Potts, the teapot; and Jo Anne Worley is the Wardrobe. There isn't anything particularly haunting, and not all the script's variations are fresh. But this is easily the zippiest Disney cartoon feature in the thirty years since "101 Dalmatians." Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise directed the screenplay by Linda Woolverton.—M.S. (Cinema I, and Embassy.)

Beethoven—The director, Brian Levant, mixes a grand canine cast with drab dramatis personae, including a cruel, avaricious vet (Dean Jones) who specializes in dognapping, and an uptight suburban daddy (Charles Grodin) who manufactures air freshener. The titular hero is a St. Bernard pup who grows into a hundred-and-eighty-five-pound behemoth, wreaks havoc on Grodin's home, eats everything in sight, and does good by his adopted family. This is a family affair with a vengeance: anyone outside the nuclear core is not to be trusted. But the only persuasive bonding occurs between Beethoven and an unidentified terrier, who are together for just a few minutes. The screenplay is credited to Edmond Dantes—the Count of Monte Cristo—and Amy Holden Jones.—M.S. (5/4/92) (Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ First & 62nd Cinemas, and 23rd St. West Triplex. Matinées only.)

The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover (1990)—*A movie about a crude British thug,* Albert Spica (Michael Gambon), whose favorite method of terrorizing people is ramming things down their throats. Albert himself eats only haute cuisine; he and his wife (Helen Mirren) dine every night at a posh restaurant called Le Hollandais. This is an Art Movie, refined and terribly formal; the director, Peter Greenaway (who also wrote the script), places this barbarian smack in the middle of "painterly" compositions and encourages us to see him as a steaming hunk of offal desecrating the beauty of an artist's creation. He looks at Albert with the disdainful stare that the pukka sahib directs at a servant who has inconvenienced him. Greenaway, however, has a lot more in common with his loutish protagonist than he thinks. He obviously regards himself as an aesthetic virtuoso, but he's just a cultural omnivore. (He chews with his mouth open—we can identify almost every piece of art that has fed his imagination.) The only thing in this movie's tidy, hermetic universe that Greenaway is unable to control, or disguise with fancy brushwork, is his loathing of the body. The movie features several gross-out scenes, including a climactic act of cannibalism; the Motion Picture Association of America gave it an X rating. (The distributors released it unrated.) What's offensive about the picture, though, isn't its violence or its visceral shocks but the patrician arrogance, the smug aestheticism, the snobbishness that suffuse every frame. Greenaway is an intellectual bully: he pushes us to the ground and kicks art in our faces. Also with Alan Howard (the Lover) and Richard Bohringer (the Cook). Cinematography by Sacha Vierny.—T.R. (8th St. Playhouse; May 29-30.)

Cousin Bobby—A documentary about the Reverend Robert Castle, directed by Jonathan Demme. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Little Theatre; starting May 29.)

Deep Cover—Hip novelist-screenwriters Michael Tolkin and Henry Bean must not have watched enough TV in the eighties to realize that the premise of their script—an undercover cop gets sucked into big-time drug life—has been done to death. The director, Bill Duke, a veteran of shows like "Hill Street Blues" and "Miami Vice," should have fessed up. Larry Fishburne plays the righteous policeman who goes to work for the D.E.A. and discovers that he loves being a narcotics baron. Jeff Goldblum is the drug-dealing Jewish lawyer who becomes his partner in crime. Goldblum gets most of the good lines and a fair share of the awful ones. He knows what to do with them, but his character is self-loathing and loathsome—*the White Negro in a slick* post-yuppie edition. The visuals are as gaudy as the language (Bojan Bazelli did the look-at-me cinematography), and the plot is jolt-happy. If there's such a thing as dull flash, "Deep Cover" defines it.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Manhattan Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Center.)

Far and Away—With Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, directed by Ron Howard. (Reviewed in this issue.) (34th St. East, Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Regency.)

Howards End—James Ivory's movie version of the 1910 E. M. Forster novel is a handsome and intelligent piece of work: a faithful, well-paced, and carefully crafted dramatization of a very good story. The heroine, Margaret Schlegel (Emma Thompson), is a thirtyish Englishwoman of German ancestry who lives with her sister and her brother in a London town house. The plot brings the cultured and rather high-minded Schlegels in contact with a very different sort of family, the Wilcoxes, who appear to represent English values at their most infuriatingly solid and complacent. The emotional core of the movie is the brief, unlikely friendship that develops between Margaret and conservative Ruth Wilcox (Vanessa Redgrave), a woman who inhabits a narrow world so profoundly, and with such enormous feeling, that she transforms it. Redgrave is at her most radiant in this role. And Thompson, whose character is meant to be seen as the heir to Mrs. Wilcox's thoroughly English kind of spirituality, comes through with a thrilling, original performance; she carries the movie. These luminous performances go a long way toward putting Forster's ambitious ideas across on the screen. (Anthony Hopkins, as the no-nonsense businessman Henry Wilcox, is awfully good, too.) *The story holds us for the full two hours and* twenty minutes that the movie takes to tell it; Ivory and his screenwriter, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, have done a skillful and sensitive job of adaptation. All that's missing, really, is the elusive quality that makes Forster such a brave, moving writer: his constant striving to see beyond the story, to see through it, to transcend it. Also with Helena Bonham Carter, Samuel West, James Wilby, Nicola Duffett, Prunella Scales, and Adrian Ross Magenty.—T.R. (5/4/92) (Loews Fine Arts.)

Incident at Oglala—A documentary, directed by Michael Apted. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews Village Theatre VII, and Sutton.)

K2—No, it's not about a spot remover or a lubricant but about the second-highest peak in the world and a pair of climbers (Michael Biehn and Matt Craven) who conquer it. The mountaineering footage is so spectacular and the melodrama that goes with it so flat that you wish the filmmakers had mounted an actual expedition and made a documentary. Patrick Meyers and Scott Roberts expanded and revised Meyers' gasbag play, boosting it from the unbearable to the merely hackneyed; Franc Roddam directed, and Gabriel Beristain did the panoramic cinematography. The cast includes Patricia Charbonneau, Julia Nickson-Soul, and Raymond J. Barry, but the real stars are the Canadian and Pakistani locations.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, and Loews Festival.)

Lethal Weapon 3—When that manic L.A.P.D. detective Martin Riggs (Mel Gibson) visits the home of rough-and-ready L.A.D. cop Lorna Cole (Rene Russo), he notices that her personal computer contains Three Stooges software. Moe, Larry, and Curly, who showed up in a film clip in "LW2," have become the guiding spirits of the series. The director, Richard Donner, and the screenwriters, Jeffrey Boam and Robert Mark Kamen, assembled this entry as if it were a wacky computer game of their own. The filmmakers are too

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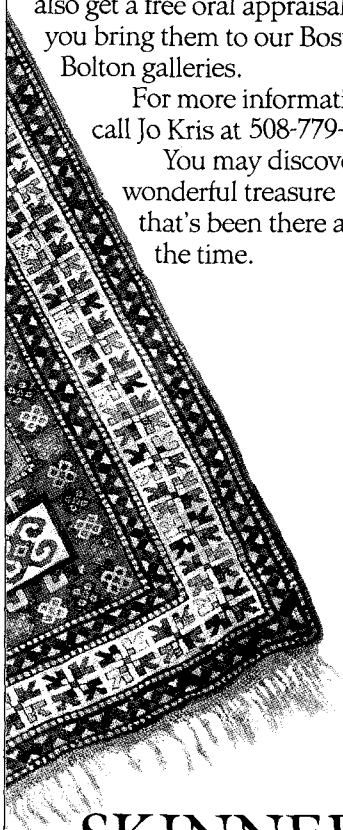

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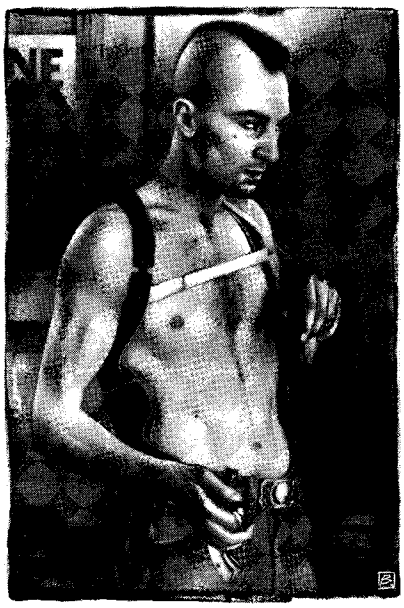

At Theatre 80 St. Marks, Robert De Niro in "Taxi Driver"

proud of their hit formula. They keep restating it: Cole describes the career of Riggs and his staid partner, Roger Murtaugh (Danny Glover), as a combination of "*The Police Gazette* and *Mad* magazine." Topically enough, the villain is a brutal, corrupt ex-cop (played by Stuart Wilson). But all Donner and company deliver is their usual proficient mix of quasi-comic "chaos and mayhem." (That's another of the script's flagpost phrases. "He's chaos," Riggs quips. "I'm mayhem.") Cole reveals the ability to fight and mug as hard as Riggs and Murtaugh, and Joe Pesci surfaces again as Valley-speaking fixer Leo Getz, presumably to prove that the more stooges the merrier. But the central gag goes unstated. Riggs and Murtaugh are supposed to be effective. The "Lethal Weapon" movies put Keystone Kops on the Thin Blue Line and ask us to cheer them toward victory.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews Orphem VII, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

M (1932)—Fritz Lang's first sound film has visual excitement, pace, brilliance of surface, and feeling for detail. Above all, it has, caught in a manhunt, a small, fat man, sweating in uncomfortable clothes—the sexual psychopath who murders little girls—interpreted by Peter Lorre with a spark of genius. It is Lorre's triumph that he makes us understand the terrified, suffering human being who murders. The film is based on the case of the Düsseldorf murderer; the police, trying to track him down, disturbed the normal criminal activities of the city, and the underworld organized to find him, so that crime could go on as usual. Lang turns the movie into a melodramatic thriller by centering on this ironic chase—actually, on the two converging chases of the police and the underworld. The structure is so mechanical it's almost pulpy, and the film reaches for other easy effects—it's similar to "The Threepenny Opera" in its satirical use of beggars and criminals. But there's nothing facile about Lorre: trapped by the underworld, he screams, "I can't help myself!" Our identification with him as a psychopath is so complete it's hard to believe that while appearing before Fritz Lang's cameras in the daytime, he was, at night, acting as a comedian in a farce. With Gustaf Gründgens and Otto Wernicke; cinematography by Fritz Arno Wagner; script by Thea von Harbou and others. (The tune Lorre whistles is the theme from Grieg's "Peer Gynt.") In German.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 31.)

A Midnight Clear—Everything about this anti-war film is geared for poignancy, from the snow-swept settings (the area around Park City, Utah, stands in for Europe) to the Christian symbolism. But what keeps viewers watching this tale of six young G.I.s on the German-French border in the winter of 1944 is the tense jeopardy of military service. The heroes belong to a genius-I.Q. intelligence-and-reconnaissance unit; the action hinges on their vain attempt to complete a rapprochement with a handful of weary Germans. The movie is high-strung yet shock-proofed. A voice-over narration sets a tone of boyish contemplation and signals that there'll be spiritual solace even if the worst happens. The writer-director, Keith Gordon, has reverently adapted William Wharton's 1982 novel. His movie has no traction, only a holy, sepulchral glow. It's so determined to be haunting that it gives up the ghost. Ethan Hawke, Gary Sinise, Frank Whaley, Kevin Dillon, Peter Berg, and Arye Gross play the soldiers; Mark Isham did the rustling mood music, and Tom Richmond the blue-white cinematography.—M.S. (5/18/92) (Plaza, 86th Street East Twin, Quad Cinema, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

Mississippi Masala—In this multicultural variation on "Romeo and Juliet," the Capulets are East Indian refugees from Uganda, and the Montagues are African-Americans who live and work with them in Greenwood, Mississippi, circa 1990. Denzel Washington stars as Demetrius, a can-do guy with his own carpet-cleaning business; Sarita Choudhury, in her feature début, plays Mina, a vaguely dissatisfied motel maid. If Demetrius and Mina are meant for each other, it's solely because they're the best-looking couple in town. Their romance fails to move past physical attraction, and that's more than a disappointment—it's a crippling letdown. The director, Mira Nair, introduces viewers to a milieu in which Indians practice their bright-hued rituals while competing with whites in the motel trade and keeping a friendly distance from blacks. But Nair and her screenwriter, Sooni Taraporevala, try so hard to be all things to all racial and ethnic groups that by the end the story ceases to make sense on its own terms. You may feel that it has no terms of its own, only a good heart and the will to please. The talented supporting cast includes Roshan Seth, Sharmila Tagore, Joe Seneca, Tico Wells, and Charles S. Dutton; the keen-eyed cinematographer is Ed Lachman.—M.S. (4/20/92) (Carnegie Hall Cinema. . . . ¶ Angelika Film Center; through May 28.)

My Cousin Vinny—The recipe behind this Dixie-based comedy hit is simple. The Southern characters consider themselves the salt of the earth; the Northern ones are proud to be the pepper. Joe Pesci plays Vinny Gambini, a neophyte Brooklyn lawyer who hightails it down to Wahzoo City, Alabama, to help his college-boy cousin (Ralph Macchio) and a friend (Mitchell Whitfield) beat a bum murder rap. Vinny's quest takes at least thirty minutes too long. The producer-screenwriter, Dale Launer, bides his time, scattering hoary gags while planting details that eventually pay off. Luckily, the director, Jonathan Lynn, keeps the cork on Pesci, releasing his energy only in the trial sequences, and doesn't rely on him to carry the movie. Marisa Tomei, as Vinny's fiancée, imbues the most obligatory reactions with either a startling ferocity or a farcical ambiguity worthy of her character's name: Mona Lisa Vito. Fred Gwynne brings a wise, weighty charm to the role of a Yale-educated judge; in a cartoon, he'd be a basset hound called Beauregard. When Pesci sags, Tomei, Gwynne, and others (especially Austin Pendleton) perk things up. At best, it's a genial variety show that could use more variety.—M.S. (4/20/92) (Crown Gotham, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Olympia.)

Night on Earth—This anthology film, written and directed by Jim Jarmusch ("Stranger Than Paradise"), has a gimmicky premise. Each of its five stories takes place in a different city, and each is about a taxicab ride. All the trips are going on at the same time, but in different time zones, so there's an illusion of temporal progress: the picture begins at sunset in Los Angeles and ends at dawn in Helsinki. (The intervening episodes take place in New York, Paris, and Rome.) It's a feeble but serviceable conceit; if the sketches were funny, we'd barely notice the preciousness of the structure. Unfortunately, the material is very thin, and the movie doesn't vary its style from sketch to sketch: Jarmusch sticks doggedly to his trademark deadpan manner. The comedian Roberto Benigni, playing a motor-mouth cabbie in the Italian episode, briefly enlivens the picture with a riotous erotic monologue. But, for the most part, the movie induces in the viewer an eerie, suspended feeling that mimics the time-stands-still monotony of a long airplane journey. It tries for a chipper, lighthearted tone, but it gives the audience a gruelling flight—a red-eye to nowhere. Also with Winona Ryder, Gena Rowlands, Giancarlo Esposito, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Rosie Perez, Isaach de Bankolé, Béatrice Dalle, and Matti Pellonpää. In English, French, Italian, and Finnish.—T.R. (5/18/92) (Angelika Film Center, and 62nd & Broadway.)

Othello (1952)—By choosing to begin this pulsating movie with the lifting of Othello's and Desdemona's caskets—and the caging of Iago—the producer-director-adapter-star, Orson Welles, does more than declare his independence from Shakespearean custom. He plunges the audience into a world where feelings and events have an afterlife, and sets a slashing, heightened tone for the whole seat-of-the-pants production. Welles edits the text ruthlessly (the film runs ninety-one minutes), using narration to bridge gaps; the cutting brings out the primal nature of the Moor's jealousy. Welles' Othello is so caught up in his warrior's pride that he can't abide any chink in his armor. Michael MacLiammoir's drily brilliant Iago is like an impotent stage manager. Suzanne Cloutier makes a strong and dignified Desdemona, and Fay Compton is a stirring Emilia; together, they tap the drama's feminist current. But what electrifies this "Othello" is Welles' lightning strokes of moviemaking genius. To unify a production that spread out over two continents and four years, he hit on a dynamic visual style. With involuted camera movements and abrupt, dizzying contrasts, he exposes the cankers of envy and suspicion. (The new print's modified soundtrack synchronizes the abysmally dubbed dialogue with the performers' lip movements—a major relief—while sacrificing some of Welles' original aural effects.)—M.S. (Village East Cinemas.)

The Playboys—This absorbing, uneven romantic comedy-drama, set in a small Irish town in 1957, takes its name from a travelling troupe. The heroine is an unwed mother named Tara (Robin Wright). She challenges every male authority figure in town and drives all the men wild—especially the violent, alcoholic constable, Sergeant Hegarty (Albert Finney), who seethes when he sees her with her actor lover Tom (Aidan Quinn). The screenwriters, Shane Connaughton (who co-wrote "My Left Foot") and Kerry Crabbe, are full of ideas and observations about orthodox religion, claustrophobic village mores, the craziness of life in a divided country, and the last gasp of strolling players before TV's ascendancy. Wright and Quinn are well matched, and the director, Gillies MacKinnon, and his cinematographer, Jack Conroy, provide images that sparkle with amorous possibilities. But the filmmakers don't funnel their panoply of themes gracefully into Tara's story. Her affair with Tom comes off as a foil to Finney's passionate portrait of stewed wrath and despair. He endows a clenched, masochistic character with such scale and force that he takes over the movie.—M.S. (5/18/92) (Gramercy, and Cinema II.)

The Player—The title character of Robert Altman's new movie is a young Hollywood studio executive named Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins), who, for no very good reason, murders an aspiring screenwriter. The picture is a brilliant dark comedy about the death of American filmmaking. It's like a documentary about a mirage: the world it shows us is sunlit and shimmering, and the people have the thin presence of holograms. Altman is doing one of his specialties here—exploring an odd American subculture—and when his idiosyncratic realism is applied to the insular, constantly self-regarding community of Hollywood "players" it has an almost hallucinatory effect. The movie has the exhilarating nonchalance of the director's seventies classics, and its tone is volatile, elusive: with breathtaking assurance, it veers from psychological-thriller suspense to goofball comedy to icy satire. Altman turns the self-reflective world of Hollywood into a fun house in which every grotesque distortion somehow appears to us as a newly discovered, paradoxical truth. Robbins gives a layered, richly suggestive performance—the sort of performance that Altman's style, at its best, produces without obvious effort. At sixty-seven, Altman still seems like the youngest filmmaker in America. Also with Greta Scacchi, Peter Gallagher, Fred Ward, Whoopi Gold-

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berg, Cynthia Stevenson, Vincent D'Onofrio, Lyle Lovett, Dean Stockwell, and Richard E. Grant; dozens of movie stars (and a handful of writers) turn up in cameos. The script, by Michael Tolkin, is adapted from his own novel.—T.R. (4/20/92) (Beekman, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

The Proud Ones ("Les Orgueilleux"; 1953)—The China Coast of Sartre's "L'Amour Redempteur" has become Veracruz in Yves Allégret's film, but the milieu is still the depths: heat, squalor, disease, and desperation, exotic but unbearable. A bored French woman (Michèle Morgan) searches for a doctor to take care of her dying husband (André Toffel); she finds a drunken derelict (Gérard Philipe) who refuses to treat him. Through founding a plague hospital, the woman and the doctor redeem themselves and, incidentally, find love. Allégret uses this story atmospherically in an effort to approximate the ironies, inconsequences, accidents, and stupidities of life, and the atmosphere *almost* redeems the movie. (Audiences gasp at one shot: the camera is still—intoxicated—as a hypodermic is slowly inserted.) In French.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; starting May 29.)

The Stranger ("Agantuk")—The last movie by the Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Ray is a modest picture, a graceful domestic comedy made in a serene, leisurely classical style. A middle-class Calcutta couple, Anila and Sudhindra Bose (played by Mamata Shankar and Deepankar De), receive an unexpected visit from a man claiming to be Anila's long-lost uncle Manmohan Mitra, who left India for Europe in 1955 and has never returned. Mitra (Utpal Dutt) is a charming, erudite, and not particularly threatening middle-aged man, but the Boses can't resolve their doubts about his identity. This movie, like each of Ray's twenty-seven previous features, doesn't announce itself immediately: both its style and its story are based on the principle that knowledge of people can be acquired only gradually and tentatively, by means of a patient accumulation of intimate experiences. His films require us to live with his characters for a while before we decide who they really are. Ray's manner here is unusually direct and plainspoken: there are a handful of awkward moments in which he seems to be lecturing the audience on the shallowness of contemporary society. This is a lovely, flawed movie rather than a great one, but if we listen closely and wait until the end before making up our minds about it we can still hear in it the voice of a great artist. In Bengali.—T.R. (5/18/92) (Walter Reade Theatre; May 25-26.)

Michèle Morgan in "The Proud Ones"

Thunderheart—This murder mystery, set on a Sioux reservation, teams Sam Shepard, as an F.B.I. agent who speaks with forked tongue, and Val Kilmer, as an agent who thinks with forked mind. Kilmer's character is one-quarter Sioux, which apparently affects the right side of his brain—he gets mystical flashes and visions. When he hangs out with Indian traditionalists like the tribal cop played drolly by Graham Greene, his ancestral instincts emerge, leading him to truth, justice, and the Native American way. John Fusco's messagey script satirizes the stereotype of the all-knowing authentic Indian, then buys into it. The director, Michael Apted, elicits credible performances from Shepard and (in a tiny part) Fred Ward, and blends them confidently with the non-professionals in the supporting cast. But Kilmer is more callow than necessary. His lack of authority makes the raising of his consciousness seem more like a coming of age.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Manhattan Twin, and Loews Orpheum VII. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas. Evenings only.)

Wayne's World—"Saturday Night Live" has become a repackaging industry. The extended antics of vidiot savants Wayne Campbell (Mike Myers) and Garth Algar (Dana Carvey) betray the same slapped-together quality as the TV specials "Toonces, the Cat Who Could Drive a Car" and "Saturday Night Live Goes Commercial," though the film is not as entertaining. Seen in five-minute spurts on "S.N.L.," beaming out their cable-access program from Wayne's basement, these two come off as cracked bellwethers of the Next Big Things of suburban youth culture, Hard Rock Division. (Their pre-"Truth or Dare" show with Madonna was a classic.) In the movie, Myers still boasts his inexplicably confident and cheery expressions—he's a mischievous smile button. But Carvey overworks his twisted mouth. Wayne and Garth weren't meant to be frozen on celluloid the way they are in this parody of coöptation, which casts them as victims of a manipulative commercial-TV promoter (Rob Lowe). Here they function as leaders of a nostalgia-fest for audiences with short attention spans. Carvey has one good bit, playing out a murder with some frosted crullers, and the ever-game Lowe musters up a funny walk after a cop gives him a heavy frisk. Penelope Spheeris directed, from a script by Myers, Bonnie Turner, and Terry Turner.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, U. A. East, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

White Men Can't Jump—A resourceful, sneaky-fast comedy about playground basketball. Ron Shelton, the writer and director, focusses on grown men trying to make a living at a boy's game, and he does full justice to the sweet absurdity of that enterprise. He keeps his eye on the fine points of playground culture and lets the story's meaning—and its humor—emerge from the details. The heroes, Sidney (Wesley Snipes) and Billy (Woody Harrelson), are addicted to the game. As a two-man team, they venture into the tough, hostile inner-city neighborhoods of Los Angeles and try to hustle the kings of the local courts. It's a great con: everyone assumes that Billy can't play the speedy, shake-and-bake style of black playground ball. Shelton and his crew (which includes the cinematographer Russell Boyd and the editor Paul Seydor) have put together basketball sequences that capture the free-flowing rhythms of the game. The two-on-two contests here give us the delicious feeling a player gets when he's *almost* out of control: flying but lucid. Harrelson's performance is rich, subtle, and delicately funny. And Snipes is just amazing: everything he does seems to leap off the screen. Shelton orchestrates the narrative like a veteran point guard: he's a wily pro with a streak of playground showmanship, and that's an ideal style for movies as well as for basketball.—T.R. (4/6/92) (Murray Hill Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and National Twin.)

White Sands—The kind of thriller that has a road atlas where the script should be. The director, Roger Donaldson, and the screenwriter, Daniel Pyne, send a small-town sheriff hurtling all over New Mexico to solve the mystery of a corpse found with half a million dollars. Willem Dafoe is completely out of his element as the Coop-like lawman; you can't be certain what his forced grin signifies, but it's sure not rural rectitude. Mickey Rourke plays an arms dealer and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio is a liberal socialite who sometimes acts as Rourke's go-between. Apart from M. Emmet Walsh's amusingly crusty turn as a cynical coroner, the one thing in the movie that has any unruly life is Rourke's wild head of hair.—M.S. (Loews 19th Street East 6, and Eastside Cinemas.)

Wisecracks—A documentary, directed by Gail Singer. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Film Forum; starting June 3.)

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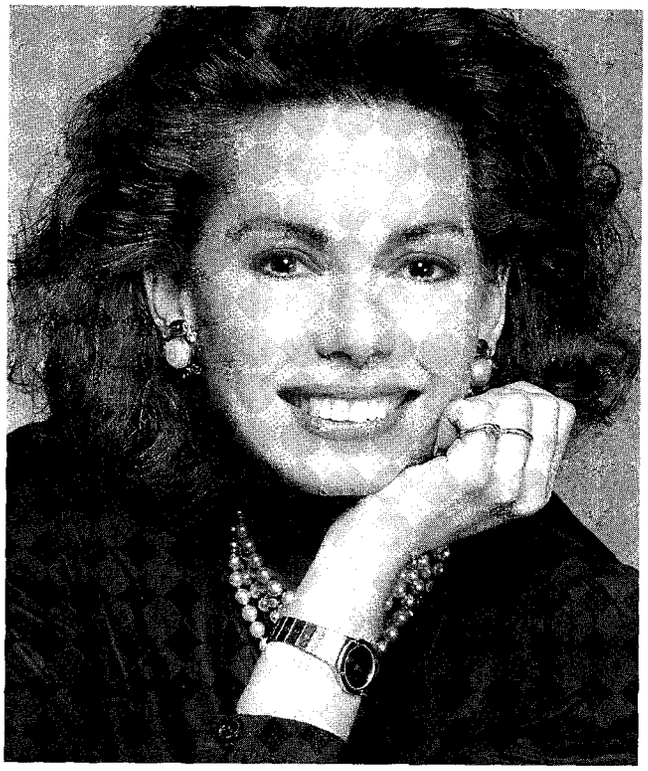

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

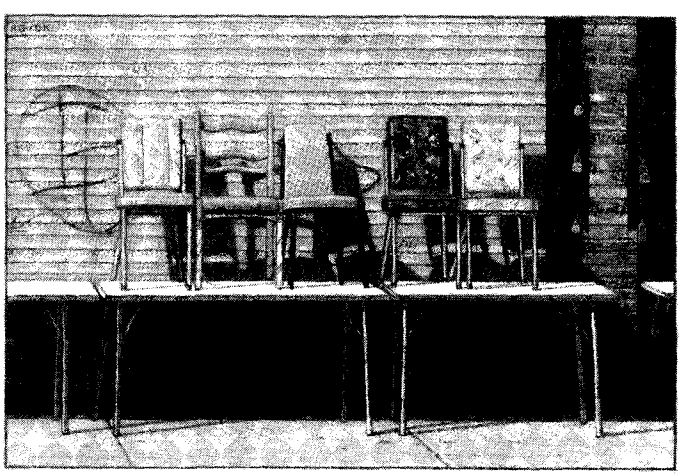
Notes and Comment

A FAN of late-night TV writes: The truth is that in the last five or six, or even ten, years my wife and I hardly watched Johnny at all. The Carson show had become a bore. When we did watch, we used to try and anticipate what Johnny would say; you could set your watch by the regularity of some of his remarks. If, for instance, a starlet complained that she didn't like being written about in the tabloids, Johnny would always say, "You know, the public isn't aware of this, but most performers are really shy people." And then, of course, there was all the "reaction comedy" stuff, with the wacky, leaky animals and the wacky, leaky guests. At some point, it all came to seem terribly dated. (Dana Carvey, on "Saturday Night Live," caught Carson's mannerisms and conversation-stoppers perfectly: "I did not *know* that!" and "That's a little weird, a little *wild*" and the murmured "Funny, funny stuff.") Instead, my wife and I would watch Ted Koppel, with his power hair and his lion tamer's ability to keep those warring heads in line, or we might even watch "Studs," on which Americans demonstrate their readiness to have sex with a total stranger in order to get on television. Only in the last few weeks have we, along with the rest of the country, returned to Johnny, and started thinking about why he lasted for thirty years, and why we are going to miss him.

What some of us forgot, I think, was the original purpose of all those riffs of Johnny's. By the end, his lines had become as ritualized as Kabuki movement, but shut your eyes and you can almost see the long procession of night-club and variety-show comics who first inspired them, back in the sixties and seventies: Shecky Greene and Buddy Hackett and Don Rickles and Mel Brooks and Rodney Dangerfield and Carl Reiner. Many of them were older, sort of worn-down guys, and all of them worked hard to convey the feeling that they really *were* wild. The underlying fiction was that they weren't professional comedians, with careers to pursue, but spontaneously funny guys, just off the plane from Vegas or Reno, who had shown up—guests!—to amuse their host. Johnny's role, so to speak, was to be the ordinary Middle American, who had to be prodded to laughter by his guests' outrageousness. He made ordinariness seem hip. By the end, though, the comedians had all become as cool and self-contained, as essentially reserved, as he was. Alongside Steve Martin or Jerry Seinfeld, Johnny looked not complementary but just older, and a little out of it.

Johnny's famous, groan-provoking badness as a sketch comic—all those awful Aunt Blabby and Art Fern and Carnac the Magnificent bits—had in them a cheerful saving irony, an understanding that this was the kind of obvious, radio-era comedy that it was somehow incumbent on him to keep alive. They were acts of complicity rather than entertainment—old-fashioned, white-bread comedy offered with a knowing twinkle. The never-fail joke in Carnac lay in the audience's being in on how dumb it all was. But behind all these acts was the hope that funny things would just overflow if you only let them, which was the prevailing show-biz myth of Johnny's early years, and this optimism is what we're going to miss. When we groan at the replays of Johnny and Dom and Burt cutting up each other's clothes and squirting each other with whipped cream—when we feel that Ed Ames' below-the-belt tomahawk throw is somehow not a comic incident worthy of Congreve—we shouldn't forget the happy ideal that lay behind all that "wacky" behavior. The premise of Carson's show was that, given a chance, things happen; the premise of most contemporary television is that everything must be *made* to happen.

On "The Arsenio Hall Show," the celebrities arrive one by one and sink coyly into the couch, and Arsenio has to actually coax them into talking, the way Art Linkletter used to coax little kids to say crazy things. If you severed David Letterman from his writers, there would be no show; on Letterman, the joke depends on the discrepancy between the resources available to a network television show and the absurd uses to which he chooses to put them. And Jay Leno's show will probably be as carefully programmed as a space-shuttle



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shot. Johnny wasn't exactly free-form, but he believed in the apparently spontaneous—was convinced that it was the purest form of comedy—and all those ritualized gags and expressions of his were just a way of keeping alive the ideal of spontaneity long after the rest of us had become too jaded to believe in it ourselves.

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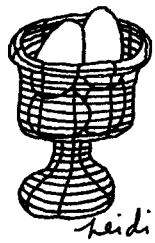
Congressman

Representative Tom Coleman, of Kansas City, Missouri, saw us on a Tuesday morning last month in his office in Washington, along with delegations of beer wholesalers and petroleum distributors. It was a busy day for him, starting with a nine-thirty meeting of the Wheat, Soybeans, and Feed Grains Subcommittee of the House Committee on Agriculture—he is the ranking Republican on the Agriculture Committee—and including nine more meetings, with individuals and groups wanting his ear on such issues vital to them as water conservation, the sale of Missouri soybeans and corn to Taiwan, a bank merger, and job-safety legislation. The beer people were irked about the federal excise tax and about a bill requiring deposits on beer cans and a bill requiring warnings against alcohol abuse to appear in all beer advertising, and the petroleum people were pushing H.R. 2966, the Petroleum Marketing Competition Enhancement Act. We were there out of idle curiosity, to see what a congressman's day is like and how he feels about his job.



The office, in the Rayburn Building, is carpeted in grayish blue and has six blue leather chairs, arranged in a circle, and a blue leather sofa that seats five. There is a big, congressman-sized desk, too, but Mr. Coleman meets with visitors in the circle of chairs, using the sofa for overflow. On the walls are photographs of him and his wife, Marilyn, with President and Mrs. Bush, Ronald Reagan, and Gerald Ford, and a portrait of Harry S Truman, and on top of a TV set is a picture of three girls in red sweaters with lacy white collars—the Colemans' three daughters. Mr. Coleman, a tall, slender, gray-haired man of forty-eight, wore a pale-blue shirt, dark-blue trousers, and a pink tie. His eyes, gray-blue, behind glasses with silver half rims, had an expression of patient interest, friendly but slightly distant.

The petroleum men were Sam and Kenny and Jim and Bob—Sweet Old Bob, as he called himself—and all of them were dressed in sports jackets and slacks. "The majors are selling low to consumers, trying to drive the independents out of the business," Jim said. "Every town had a Ma and Pa gas station, and pretty soon they'll all be boarded up."

Jim leaned in and said, "Stations are closing. In Springfield, where I had a hundred thousand gallons, now, after forty years in business, I have thirty or forty thousand. I'm in danger of losing it all."

Sweet Old Bob was big and spoke with a thick Southern drawl. "And if Congress declares used oil a hazardous waste and requires the seller to dispose of it, we'll really have a problem," he said. "In my boyhood, if they had a dusty road they'd sprinkle oil on it. They took oil and greased pigs with it. They used to put a chain up between two posts and put oil on gunnysacks, and the hogs would run under the gunnysacks and it'd help get rid of lice and fleas. Used oil isn't hazardous waste, it's medicinal."

On their way out, the petroleum men stopped to say hello to the beer group, just arriving, which was headed by Frank O'Malley, the president of O'Malley Beverage, Inc., of St. Joseph, and Mary Ann Krey, the chief executive officer of the Krey Distributing Company, of St. Peters.

"We appreciate you not writing any rubber checks," Mr. O'Malley told Mr. Coleman. Mr. Coleman said that he didn't have an account in the House bank—that his wife had thought it didn't make sense to put their money where it wouldn't earn interest. Mr. O'Malley said the tax on beer was having a drastic impact on the industry and destroying jobs. He said it made no sense to include a warning in beer commercials. "Hell, we're trying to sell beer," he said.

"The commercials make things too damn glamorous," Mr. Coleman said. "They're sexist. I'm offended, frankly. You're offending half the people in this country, and you-all ought to know that." He said he was especially offended by a beer commercial in which bikini-clad women paraded around.

"We want to be part of the solution," Ms. Krey said. "We feel very responsible, but it's a legal, viable product and we want to be able to sell it."

"We provide jobs for a lot of people, and that's important," Mr. O'Malley said.

After the beer meeting, Mr. Coleman leaned back and told us that he gets about fifty letters and twenty-five phone calls a week from people who want to come in and talk to him, plus hundreds of letters of opinion. "Sometimes they send you a ten-page letter, in minute detail. You think, Can't they write *short*? We're inundated with information. I'd like to learn more about music and art, but I'll have to wait until I retire. Congress is a twenty-four-hour-a-day job. People feel alienated, and it's our job to make ourselves available. People are always trying to let you know what they think, what they need, and you need to know and understand them—you need to talk to strangers in the street, keep your head up. Even so, you're constantly battered by things—the problems that exist, the gridlock, the combative atmosphere. You get a lot of single-issue people who are operating on misinformation. That drives me up the wall—people who distort information to the public for their financial gain. Let's don't distort what the thing is. It creates a frustration between the public and policymakers. Everybody's frustrated. The process seems not to be working out very well right now. But if I didn't think it was worth it I wouldn't run for reëlection. In my case, I can do more for my district, as senior Republican on Agriculture, than a newcomer could do."

Out in the hall, we ran into Sweet Old Bob, heading for another appointment to talk about petroleum marketing, and we walked along with him. His actual name was Robert Wollenman, and he was a bulky man in a white shirt, a flowered maroon tie, a navy-blue blazer, and tan trousers. "Our Number One purpose for coming to Washington was House Bill 2966," he said. "It's been real tough the last couple of years. So we came in to get Coleman's endorsement. We had our guns loaded, too. We don't walk in there fat, dumb, and happy, though we might be. Lobbying is hard work. I

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like to do it. I pay my own way—fly down, stay at the Capitol Holiday Inn. I saw six congressmen this time. I'm protecting myself, my sons, the industry, and I think I have talent. We've survived. A lot of them haven't. I'm a Phillips 66 jobber. I sell gasoline, diesel fuel, motor oils, fuel oil, plus milk, bread, cigarettes—anything you can find in a convenience store. The district manager named me Sweet Old Bob, and now everybody calls me that. You go down to St. Joe and ask anybody for Sweet Old Bob and they'll find me."

His grandfather was born in Switzerland in 1834, came to America, fought in the Civil War, and was once ambushed by Jesse James, Mr. Wollenman told us, and he went on to say, "I rode on horseback on the Santa Fe Trail in 1929. I was eight. I'm going to drive the trail from Boonville to Santa Fe. I'm a lucky man. I'm seventy years old, and, I tell you, it beats the hell out of being dead. I'm interested in a whole bunch of stuff. Books are my favorite thing. I own most of James Michener's books. The thing I love is it's fiction and based on fact. I learned more Bible and history from 'The Source' than from going to church and Sunday school for sixty years. There's so much to learn about what goes on in the world."

Maneuvers

IN New York City, a uniformed police officer has rarely been seen on a bicycle since the eighteen-nineties, when Charles Murphy—known as Mile a Minute Murphy, for his speed on the pedals—was hired by the Police Department to chase reckless cyclists. Now, a century later, cops are going to be on bikes again. In a week or so, twenty-five beat cops will begin patrolling the 24th Precinct, which corresponds roughly to the Upper West Side, on bicycles. And thirty-six members of the Housing Authority Police have just begun bike patrols in selected projects in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. It's no secret that there are elements within the Police Department that would be happy if a cop were never seen on a bike again, but for now progressive forces enjoy the upper hand. At the end of the summer, Cops on Bikes will be evaluated, and a decision will be made on whether to expand the pilot program to other precincts or close it down.

The man who steered Cops on Bikes through the N.Y.P.D. bureaucracy is Inspector Mike Julian. He works on the top floor of headquarters, not far from Commissioner Lee Brown, and when we met him he was standing outside his office with his hands on the handlebars of a twenty-one-speed Raleigh mountain bike. The frame was painted white, and on the crosspiece, in black letters, were the words "Police Bike." Inspector Julian told us that there were two schools of thought on the right kind of bike for a cop. "If the cop is going to be doing a lot of off-road riding—curb-jumping, stair ascents, what have you—then the mountain bike is the best thing," he said. "But if the cop is going to stay in the street, then maybe a hybrid is better." He added that while the housing police had been practicing what he called "rodeo stuff"—rolling takedowns, power slides, crossover dunks, panic stops—the beat cops were going to be less aggressive, at least at first. "Our main thing is involvement in the community," the Inspector explained. "Bikes help break down the barrier that exists between cops and the public. As far as the bad guys are concerned, we feel that just introducing into their minds the idea that the guy down the street on a bike may be a cop is going to be a deterrent. It gives them one more thing to worry about."

Inspector Julian then counted off on his fingers and dismissed the usual objections to Cops on Bikes: one, the cops won't make enough arrests; two, whenever the cop does make an arrest his bike will get stolen; three, police work in this city can be risky, but bicycling is actually dangerous; fourth, the "silliness factor"—the conviction held by some of his superiors that a cop on a bike is comical. "We're doing stuff right off the bat to avoid the potential of cops' getting laughed at," he said. He led the way to a storage room that was filled with Cops on Bikes paraphernalia. "No shorts, for example. Shorts are out for the time being. Maybe later, when people get used to cops on bikes, we'll go to shorts, but for now we've got these long nylon pants with Velcro doohickeys around the ankles so you don't get your cuffs caught in the chain."

After our conversation with Inspector Julian, we walked home, imagining how each cop we saw would look on a bike. We chuckled from time to time. The physique of the average officer has not evolved in the direction of the bicycle. It's easy to imagine a cop sitting in a patrol car, with the windows rolled up, and communicating with the outside world over a radio. But the idea of a cop on a bike—hulking shoulders angled awkwardly over handlebars; a wide rear end bal-

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anced on a narrow bicycle seat—is somehow funny. Apparently, it has always been funny. "The spectacle of the staid, sober, heavyweight policemen of this city breaking their necks and the injunction against profane swearing while learning to master their vicious steeds will be a show that will stand almost any admission the city may please to charge for it." That appeared in the Minneapolis *Tribune* on May 1, 1896.

We decided to visit the Two-Four, which is police lingo for the 24th Precinct, and talk to some of the cops who will be riding the bikes.

"So. You're going to be riding a bike!" we said to the first cop we met.

"Looks like we're the guinea pigs," the man said, with a thin smile.

"You're not looking forward to it?"

"Hey, I haven't been on a bike in fifteen years."

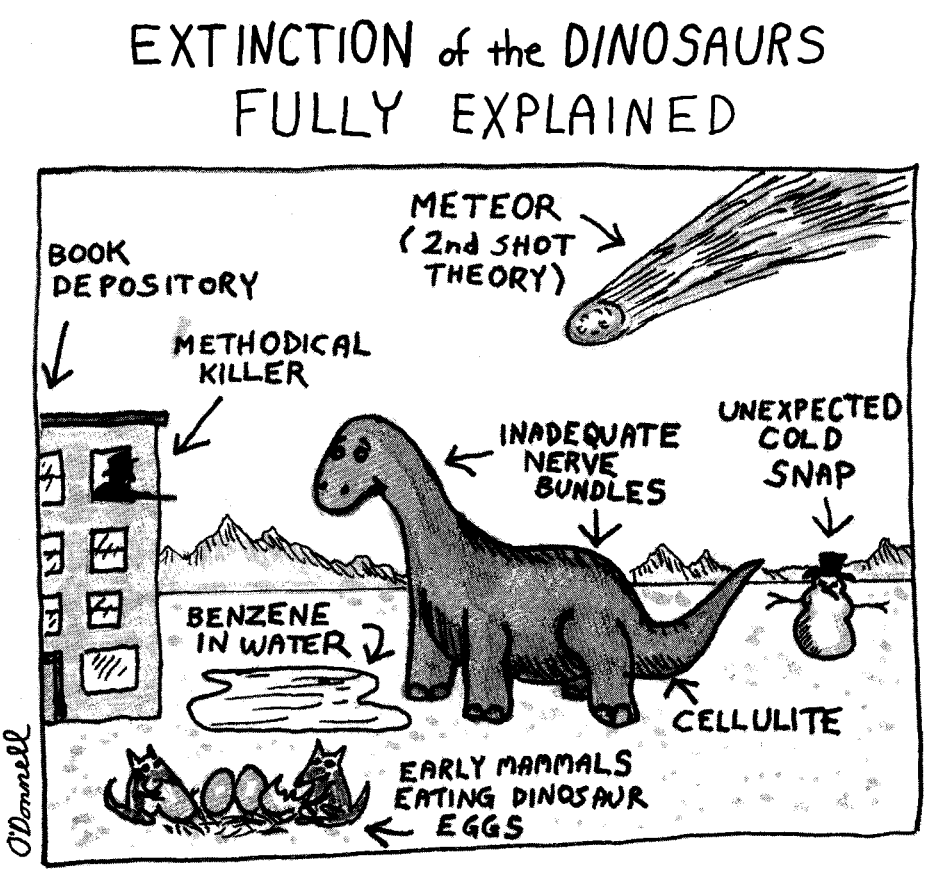
We left the Two-Four with a good feeling about Cops on Bikes. Riding a bike is obviously not something that comes naturally to a police officer. If cops were a primitive tribe and you wanted to keep them out of your village, you would ring it with bicycles to scare them away. To ride a bike in this city is to make oneself prey to abusive drivers, awful pavement, bad weather, and filth—to side willfully with the less powerful. Hurray for the cops for doing that. While we and everybody else were thinking about the Los Angeles riots, that phrase Cops on Bikes kept swimming into our mind, like a magic charm. What do we do about police brutality? Cops on Bikes. How do we get kids to trust the police? Cops on Bikes. Surely no cops on bikes would ever have beaten Rodney King.

Finally, we got to see a cop on a bike. In a playground in the Alfred E. Smith project, in lower Manhattan, the Housing Authority held a kind of commencement. Thirty-six housing cops in knee-length navy-blue cotton shorts, light-blue polo shirts, and helmets, and wearing their gun belts and rather sinister-looking sunglasses, came cycling into the playground in a tight formation. They neatly peeled off into two groups, circled the perimeter of the playground in opposite directions, then pedalled toward a platform at one end and stopped, thirty-six abreast. A dozen of their superiors, in dress uniforms, saluted the cops on bikes. Housing Authority Chairwoman Sally Hernandez-Piñero made a speech in praise of them, and everyone applauded.

Then Housing Authority Police Inspector Douglas Zeigler said that the cops would demonstrate some maneuvers. "The cone maneuver," he announced. A cop zigzagged between safety cones. Applause. "The kickstand dismount." A cop got up some speed, jumped off his bike, and pushed the kickstand down with his foot. More applause. "The panic stop." A cop pulled smartly out of formation, looped around to the far end of the playground, gathered speed, flew past the press, and approached the platform at about twenty miles an hour. He was supposed to hit the brakes and dismount from the rear, but something went wrong, and instead he flew head first over the handlebars. The bike sped toward the senior officers, and they threw up their arms to ward it off. It smashed into the platform, sending the Housing Authority seal flying.

"My God!" a woman next to us said. "He nearly took out the Chairwoman."

The fallen cop, bleeding from one elbow, gravely picked himself up and, head bowed, slowly cycled back to his buddies.



Flipping

AS far as we know, flipping has not crossed any bridges. It is still totally local. It's done in the South Bronx, in a vacant lot that flippers call the Garden, at 163rd Street and Prospect Avenue. Flipping involves the performance of aerial maneuvers—flips and twists and spirals—over a pile of mattress springs. Kevin Jones and Terrence Ford have been flipping for years. Terrence is fourteen, and his ambition to flip was born in him about ten years ago, when his father used to pick him up and toss him into the air. After that, he jumped mainly on his bed until his mother enrolled him in a gymnastics class, and then he learned the maneuvers that are fundamental to flipping style. Kevin, who is fifteen, learned by watching other flippers.

"Every day is flip," Kevin says. "Jump and flip. Flip is like a drug to me, like a habit. I can't go a day without flipping." Kevin is slight and rangy and soft-spoken. He has almond-shaped eyes and a round face. Terrence is smaller. He smiles quickly, but is reserved in his manner. Occasionally, Kevin and Terrence compete with each other—they call this battling—but Kevin always walks away the winner, because he can perform a double back flip and Terrence can't.

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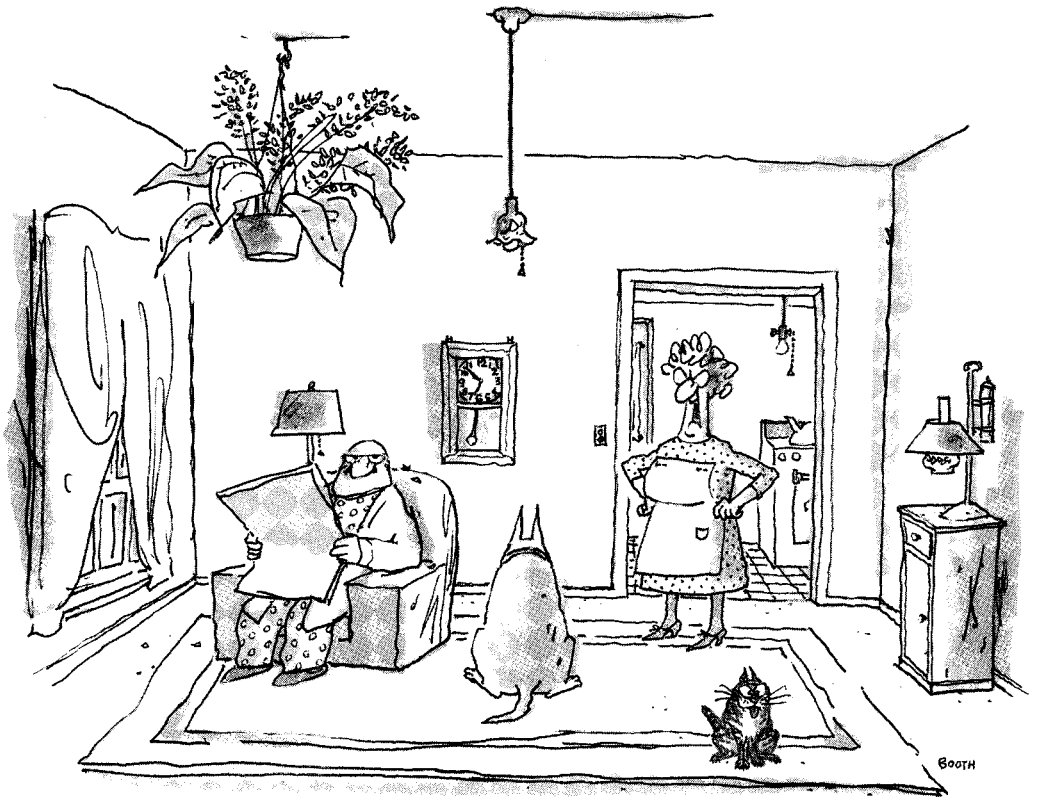

"I've come to the conclusion that there isn't anything you can say that will cheer me up or make it better!"

• •

At the moment, flippers are flipping in reduced circumstances. They launch themselves from six mattress springs piled on top of a box spring near the 163rd Street end of the Garden. The flipper performs his trick and lands on the crash pad—a complete mattress resting on a stack of four mattress springs. The reason for having that mattress on top is to keep the feet of the flippers from getting caught in the metal. In terms of equipment, the highest moment in the history of flipping occurred about a year ago, when the flippers had three lines of mattresses and springs running nearly the length of a block. At the head of two of the lines were refrigerators. The flippers would launch themselves from the tops of the refrigerators and twist and flip and twirl like Slinkys down the rows of mattresses and springs until they arrived at the other end of the block. This golden period came to an end when a travelling revivalist set up his tent nearby, and the Sanitation Department came along and carried off the mattresses to clean up the area.

The flippers collect their springs from factories that restore mattresses—especially from Peters Mattress, at 165th Street. Terrence's father, a small, slender man with thick glasses, employs himself by scouting the neighborhood for discarded mattresses and selling them to the factory. Sometimes the factory discards the springs—you can rebuild a mattress only so many times—and these springs become flipping equipment. Kevin and Terrence and their friends drag them to the Garden. A set of springs lasts about six weeks, then begins to get lumps and depressions, which throw the flippers' trajectory out of kilter, and may sometimes make them land clear of the crash pad.

Beside the Garden is a row of ailanthus trees, and next to that is a red brick apartment building. One day, as Kevin is standing beside the crash pad, a window on the fourth floor opens and a young man's voice calls out, "Yo, Kevin, do a show for me!"

Kevin says, "That's my friend Jigga. His real name's Jamal. He's been working in a barbershop. He's someone who really started me flipping. He's old now, but he can still do it."

Kevin bounces several times on the launching pad, forces his arms hard to his sides, and turns a somersault in the air. In the little slot of the window, two children stand between two women. One of the women is holding back a curtain. They all cheer.

Terrence is carpentering with his grandfather in a building overlooking the other side of the Garden. He hears the noise and appears in a window of that building. Kevin yells for him to come flip. In the meantime, Jigga arrives. He is twenty-three, and small and lithe, and he wears a gold earring that spells his nickname. The women in the apartment window, it turns out, are his wife and her sister, and the children are Jigga's son and a friend.

"They want me to flip," Jigga says. Kevin smiles. Jigga says, "I don't flip no more." He takes some cassette tapes out of his pockets, though, and a comb, hands them to Terrence, who has just arrived, and steps onto the launching pad. He bounces several times, gathering height, and does a creaky version of a back flip.

"Hey, Jigga!" one of the women shouts. "You can do better than that!" Jigga smiles shyly. "Do a twirl!" she shouts.

"No twirl," says Jigga, bouncing on the launching pad. "I'm scared to hit the floor."

"*Jigga!*" yell the children.

Jigga performs another flip, this one more self-assured, but not stylish. Kevin steps onto the launching pad and does a double.

"*He beat you, Jigga!*"

Jigga flips once more. Quarters fly from his pockets. Terrence collects them. Jigga tries a double flip and misses the crash pad completely.

"*Boo, Jigga!*" Lots of laughter.

Terrence hands Jigga his tapes, his comb, and his quarters. Kevin steps onto the launching pad, and begins to gather height. The mattresses creak. Terrence says, "You all watch what he's about to do." In the air above the Garden, Kevin turns his back to the apartment building, claps his hands to his knees, and revolves twice against the sky. A car stops. By the time Kevin lands, the driver is applauding.

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MILLIE'S GEAR SLIPS

One day, the family set off on a little car trip.
Everybody ready?
They were just about to leave when Millie realized she'd forgotten her sweater.
Oops! I'll be right back!
It took her about four minutes and eleven seconds to get the sweater and return to the car.
Okeydokey! Now we're all set.
As they were driving, she thought, This is exactly the place I would have been four minutes and eleven seconds ago, but now it's slightly different, and I'll never see what I was supposed to see.
She realized she would always be exactly that little space of time behind.
MY LIFE NOW = (MY REAL LIFE) - (FOUR MINUTES + ELEVEN SECONDS)
In the supermarket, she thought, Normally I would have been in Aisle Three, but here I am, amongst the produce.
In a line at the movies, she knew herself always to be about two or three places behind her real place.
It was sort of horrendous, as there was really no way to fix this kind of thing.
However, as the years passed she grew accustomed to it.
R. Crumb

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MAUNDY

A FEW days before Easter, Maggie's father found a man in a sanitary lane, and took him home. All through Badminton, our housing estate, sandy, stony sanitary lanes ran between the houses on Edward Avenue and Henry Street and Elizabeth Crescent. They had been built so that the night-soil men, coming like ghosts after dark, could remove the black rubber buckets without being seen.

Our fathers returned home from the desert war in Egypt and Libya and began battling the bare veldt. Every weekend they wrestled the hard, red earth into gardens. Badminton was a new housing estate, built outside Johannesburg for returning soldiers. Its streets were named after English kings and queens, because we were English South Africans. The boxy new houses, with their corrugated-iron roofs, ran down a slope to a small stream and a copse of giant blue gums. Seven years after the war ended, soldiers who had gone to fight against Germans had turned into gardeners in uniform. My father worked in his Army boots. Gus Trupshaw wore a sailor's blue shirt. Nathan Swirsky put on his leather flying helmet when he took out his motorbike.

Our fathers looked up from their zinnias, mopped their brows, and said, "It's hotter down south than it was up north, make no mistake." They cursed the African heat. They cursed the stubborn shale that had to be broken up with picks, forked over, sieved, spread and sweetened with rich brown earth, delivered by Errol the topsoil man.

They cursed the burglars. My mother said that there were swarms of burglars hiding among the blue gum trees. They ran down the sanitary lanes at night and slipped into the houses like greased lightning. As I lay in bed at night, I saw the sanitary lanes teeming with burglars and night-soil men, coming and going. Nobody talked about the night-soil men. They came and went in our sleep, though in the morning we caught the scent of something we wished to forget.

Nobody talked about Maggie, either. She lived next door and took off all her clothes from time to time and ran around her house. And we all pretended not to notice. She was the fastest ten-year-old on the estate.

My mother was next door in a flash when she saw the man working in Maggie's garden. He wore old khaki shorts. His legs ended in stumps, inches below the shorts, and the stumps were tied up in sacking. He pulled himself everywhere in a red tin wagon, hauling himself along with strong arms. His muscles were huge. The legless man sat upon a paper bag that he had spread in the bottom of his wagon. It read "Buy Your Brand-New Zephyr at Dominion Motors."

"Hell's bells! What could I do? He just followed me home," said Maggie's father. "He tells me his name's Salisbury."

"I don't care if he's the King of Siam," my mother said to my father a little while later. "It's bad enough when that little girl tears about the place in the you-know-what, for all the world and his wife to stare. Now they have a cripple in their garden!"

My father was studying the annual report of the South African Sugar Association. "Figures for 1952 show exports up."

"Some of us cannot lose ourselves in sugar reports," my mother said. "Some of us have to look life in the eye."

"For heaven's sake, Monica," my father said. "The poor sod's lost his legs. I'm sure he doesn't like it any more than you do. But he's still human. Well, more or less."

Then Maggie appeared, running around the side of her house. "Speak of the devil!" my mother said. Maggie was skinny and very brown. Her bare legs flashing, round and round the house she ran. Her dog, a Doberman called Tamburlaine, ran after her, barking loudly.

"Martin," said my mother, "come away from the window. It only encourages her if you stare."

Maggie's father was chasing her with a blanket. He caught up, and threw it over her. Like a big gray butterfly net.

"You'd hardly think this was Easter," said my mother. "I don't know where to put my face."

Salisbury sat in his red wagon, doing some weeding. "What on earth do you think is going through his head?" my mother demanded. "That little girl might be less keen to parade in the altogether if she knew what was going through his head."

"I see that Henry's been planting out beardless irises," said my father. "The beardless iris loves a sunny spot and a good bit of wall."

"Heavens above, where will it all end?" my mother asked. "Our neighbors have a cripple in their garden. Easter is almost on us. There are burglars in the blue gums. Soon the streets will be full of servants. Did you know that they've taken to asking for Easter boxes? First Christmas boxes, now Easter boxes. I suppose they'll be asking for Michaelmas boxes next. Dressed to the nines, some of them. And worse for wear."

I went to bed that night and thought about the burglars down among the blue gums that grew thickly across the road from the big houses in Edward Avenue. All over Badminton our fathers, home from the war, slept with their Army-issue pistols in their sock drawers, ready at any moment to rush naked into the African night, blasting away. The burglars were said to creep up on the houses and cast fishing lines through the burglar bars to hook wallets and handbags from our bedrooms.

We all believed in the burglars. Everyone except for Ruthie Swirsky, the chemist's new wife. But she was English, from Wimbledon. Swirsky had travelled to Europe and brought her home with him. "Burglars with fishing rods," Ruthie Swirsky said to my father just after she moved to the estate. "I've never heard of anything so absurd. Pull the other one, Gordon."

"Pull the other what?" my mother wanted to know later.

"How would I know, Monica?" said my father. "Leg, I suppose."

"Whatever she had in mind, it wasn't a leg," said my mother.

"Whatever she had in mind, it wasn't a leg!" sang my friends Tony, Sally, and Eric, and I as we rolled down the steep, grassy banks in Tony's garden that Eastertime in Badminton.

FOR the rest of the holiday, nothing much seemed likely to happen. The days looming ahead were too hot somehow, even though we were well into autumn. Our fathers worked in their

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gardens tending to their petunias and phlox and chrysanthemums. They sprayed their rosebushes against black spot, moving in the thick clouds of lime sulfur like refugees from a gas attack in the trenches.

Ernest Langbein had fallen in love with Maggie. Ernest was an altar server at the Church of the Resurrection in Cyrildene, and he told Eric that if only Maggie would stop taking off her clothes, their love might be possible. Maggie was not easy to get on with. When she had no clothes on, she wasn't really there. And when she was dressed she was inclined to make savage remarks. I met her in Swirsky's Pharmacy on Maundy Thursday. She wore a blue dress with thick black stockings. Her brown, pixie face was shaded by a big white panama hat, tied beneath her chin with thick elastic. I was wearing shorts. I'd never seen her look so covered up. She looked at my bare feet and said, "You have hammertoes, Martin." It seemed very unfair.

We were standing behind the wall of blue magnesia bottles which Swirsky built across his shop on festive occasions, like Christmas and Easter. We heard Ruthie Swirsky say to Mrs. Raubenheimer of the Jewish Old Age Home across the road, "I'm collecting Maundy money. It's an Easter custom we have in England. The Royal Mint makes its own money, and the Queen gives it to pensioners and suchlike. The deserving poor. In a special purse."

Mrs. Raubenheimer said that those who could afford it could afford it. Swirsky came around the magnesia wall and grinned at us. He crackled in his starched white coat. His mustache was full and yet feathery beneath his nose. Black feathers, it was. "Well, kiddies," he said. "Can I count on you? Pocket money is welcome for Ruthie's Maundy box. What Ruthie wants she usually gets." He rattled a black wooden collection box.

My mother said, "It's appalling. The Swirskys aren't even Easter people. The Queen of England does not live on an estate infested with burglars. Have you seen the collection box Ruthie Swirsky's using? I happen to know that it belongs to St. John's Ambulance. She simply turned it around so you can't see the badge."

"If you're going to divide the world into those who are and those who are not Easter people," said my father, "you may as well go and join the government. They do it all the time."

"I have no intention," said my mother, "of joining the government."

All the kids gave to Ruthie Swirsky's Maundy-money box. We collected empty soft-drink bottles and got back a penny deposit down at the Greek Tea Room. Swirsky shook the box until our pennies rattled. "Give till it hurts," he said. "Baby needs new booties."

A deputation arrived at the pharmacy. Gus Trupshaw had been elected to speak for the estate. He wore his demob suit and brown Army boots with well-polished toes. He said that everyone objected to the idea of Ruthie's giving away money to the servants. What would they expect next Easter? It might be difficult for an English person to understand. But the cleaners, cooks, and gardeners of Badminton got board and lodging and wages. "They might be poor," Gus Trupshaw explained, "but they're not deserving."

"Are you telling me I may not give my Maundy money to whomsoever I choose?" Ruthie asked, her face white beneath her red hair. "This is outrageous."

"This isn't Wimbledon," said Gus Trupshaw. "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."

Swirsky leaned over to us and whispered. "When you're next in Rome, I can recommend the Trevi Fountain. But watch out for pickpockets."

Ruthie Swirsky tapped the black collection box with her finger after Gus Trupshaw left. She told Swirsky she was so mad she could spit. She asked him to find Errol the topsoil man. "Tell him I have a job for his wheelbarrow."

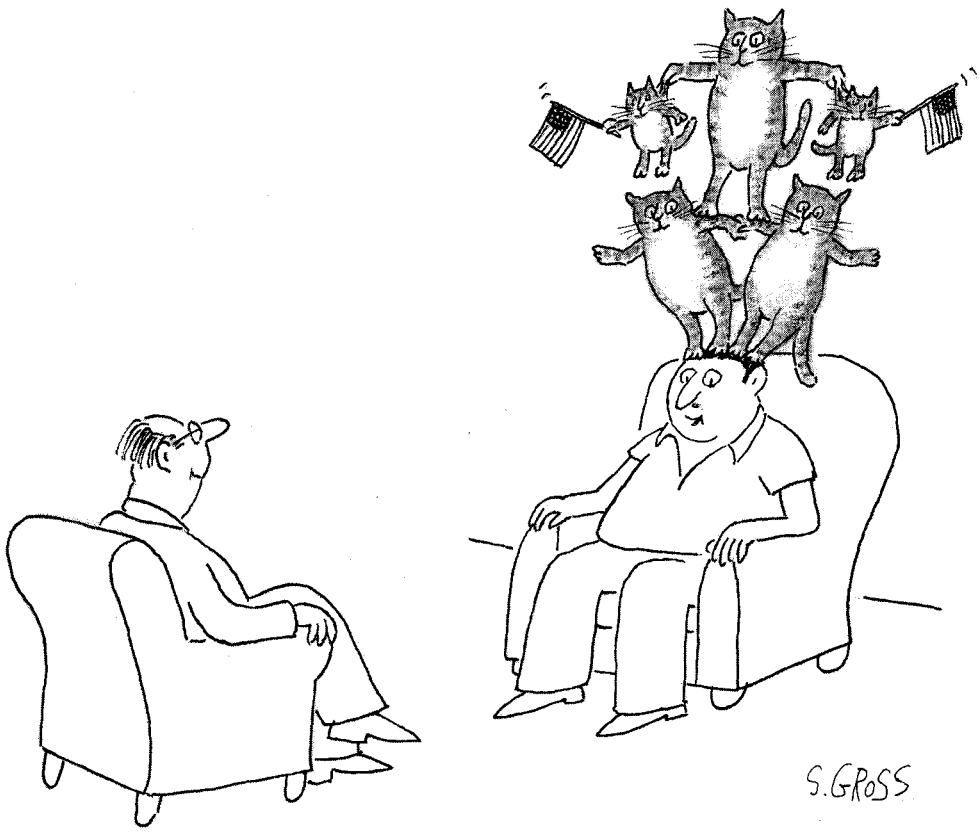
Later, it was my mother who spotted Errol wheeling his barrow into the yard next door. "There appears to be some movement at the neighbors'. I think I'll go and lie down," she said.

Errol stopped beside Salisbury with his wheelbarrow. He laid the paper bag from Dominion Motors on the floor of the barrow and lifted Salisbury out of his wagon. Then he set off up Henry Street, wheeling Salisbury, with my friend Sally, her brother Tony, Eric, and me tagging along behind them.

We heard the iron wheels scattering gravel in Henry Street.

"Where are we going?" Salisbury asked Errol in a deep, growling voice.

"Boss Swirsky's place. Sit still and don't make trouble." Errol maneuvered the barrow right up to the front



"Cats! You can't live with them and you can't live without them."

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door of Swirsky's Pharmacy. Papas, the owner of the Greek Tea Room, and Mr. Benjamin, the Rug Doctor, came out of their shops to stare. A couple of ladies from the Jewish Old Age Home also stopped to watch. Ruthie Swirsky came out of the pharmacy. Nathan was next to her. There was sun on his mustache, and it looked as if it had been dipped in oil. Swirsky carried the collection box. He held it carefully, as if it were a baby, and his face when he looked at Ruthie was soft and loving. A crowd of cleaners, cooks, and gardeners gathered across the road. They looked angry.

"I hear you're a poor man, Salisbury," said Ruthie. "So I've decided to help you."

"Yes, Madam," said Salisbury.

"I hope you're not going to leave him there all day, Mrs. Swirsky," said Mrs. Raubenheimer.

Ruthie ignored everyone. "This box is yours. Take it home with you. Take it back to your family. Take it with my blessings."

"Yes, Madam," said Salisbury.

Errol wheeled him home quickly. Salisbury held the box tight to his chest. All over the estate there were servants watching. You could tell the servants were angry because they weren't allowed to have any of the Maundy money. Some of them shouted at Errol as he wheeled Salisbury down Henry Street.

"That's what you get from Africans and Asians," said my mother. "That's exactly the sort of thing that led to the Cato Manor Riots. We could be facing more of them. Mark my words."

Later that night, we were woken by people shouting next door. Tamburlaine the Doberman began barking. Someone was crying. My father got up and put on his brown woollen dressing gown. "Take your hockey stick, Gordon," said my mother. To me she said, "Martin, you take the torch. I'm going to call the police."

We found Maggie and her father trying to lift Salisbury into his red wagon. He was crying and swearing and waving his strong arms about.

"He's as strong as a lion, Gordon," said Maggie's father. "Help me. I think Tamburlaine's taken a nip out of him."

Then Gus Trupshaw arrived and fired several shots. He thought he was using his starting pistol, but it was a flare gun and the sky was like noon for minutes. I could see Salisbury's tears.

"He says somebody has stolen his money," said Maggie's father. "People came and robbed him. I let him sleep here last night. I gave him the toolshed to doss down in. In the morning, Errol was going to wheel him to the bus stop. He was going home."

Salisbury sat in the red tin wagon, rubbing his eyes and crying.

"Lock him in the toolshed," my father suggested. "Anything to keep him away from that dog. We'll sort this out in the morning."

"It's very hard," said Gus Trupshaw. "We'll have to replace the money. We'll have a whip round. I just hope Ruthie Swirsky knows what she's done. You can't mess around with Africa."

But they had reckoned without Salisbury's strong arms.

When they went to the toolshed in the morning, Salisbury was gone. He had torn the door off its hinges. He had levered himself into his little red wagon, and he had vanished.

"Thank heavens for small mercies," said my mother.

ON Good Friday afternoon, Errol found the little tin wagon down by the blue gums. Then a party of men found Salisbury. He was hanging from a branch by his belt. The men made a kind of tent of blankets around him, so that the children shouldn't see.

Ruthie Swirsky waited for the police to come and take Salisbury away. She asked the constable if she might send a little something to his next of kin. The constable laughed at her and said, "People like Salisbury have no next of kin." Ruthie Swirsky asked the constable for his number. And he threatened to arrest her.

The police took Salisbury away, and it might have ended there. Except that Ruthie Swirsky found out that he had a brother and a sister in a village sixty miles away. "This is ridiculous!" said Gus Trupshaw. "If we had to take responsibility for every soul that dies, where would we be?"

On Easter Saturday, the coffin turned up on the back of Errol the topsoil man's truck. "Mrs. Swirsky, she arranged it," said Errol.

"She actually believes she's still in Wimbledon," said my father. But he and Gus Trupshaw offered to drive the coffin back to Salisbury's home village. We all watched as they loaded the coffin onto the back of Gus Trupshaw's new Ford truck. "If you don't hear from us in a week, send a search party," said Gus Trupshaw.

"For heaven's sake," said my mother. "You're only driving to the other

"I see your Granny Smith, and I raise you a Golden Delicious."

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side of Rustenburg. Just explain that you're very sorry about what happened, and don't tell them where you live."

The men got home at sunset. "We would've been back earlier," my father said, grinning. "But we had a feast with the family. It's tradition. They wanted to thank us for bringing him home."

"Chicken and rice," said Gus Trupshaw.

"Quite normal, really," said my father.

"Normal? My godfathers, Gordon," said my mother. "It may be normal to you. But I was worried sick. And there are Easter eggs to be hidden in our garden tonight. The children have waited up while you've been eating chicken and rice."

You could tell that the men were pleased with themselves. It was as if they had been through some huge adventure at the other end of the world.

"Yes," said Gus Trupshaw, as though they did such things every day. "First chicken and rice, and then peaches."

They came into the kitchen and my mother said to me, "Your father's been eating chicken, with strangers."

"Quite normal, really," said my father again.

My mother held up a hand. "Please. Not another word. It gives me the heebie-jeebies just thinking about it."

We were sitting around the house waiting to be sent to bed as soon as our fathers were ready to hide the Easter eggs. They always hid them the night before. On Easter morning, we would go searching for them before the sun was high enough to melt the chocolate. Maggie was saying that dogs always bit black people, because they had different blood.

Sally said, "But I saw blood on the ground after Tamburlaine bit Salisbury. And it was red. Just like mine."

"Then why do dogs only bite black people?" Tony asked.

"They don't. Last year, our Aunt Mary got bitten—didn't she? And she's from Kenya," said Sally. "Do you know anyone not black who has been bitten, Martin?" Sally wore a dress the color of apricots. Her shiny yellow hair was held tightly in a blue Alice band. Her brown legs were bare. She had this way of feeding the toes of one foot into the other.

I said, "I remember Strydom's dog, Attila, bit the postman once."

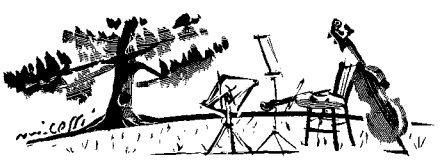
"Martin will say anything. Just to please you," Tony loudly snapped the elastic in the waistband of his brown boxer shorts. "Because Martin adores you."

"Rubbish!" said Sally. "You don't really adore me, do you, Mart?"

"I don't adore anyone," I said.

"Oh, yes, Mart. Then why are you blushing?" Maggie asked.

Swirsky arrived on his motorbike with Papas sitting in the sidecar. Papas carried a big cardboard box with "Sundowner Brandy" written on it. We knew that the box held our Easter eggs, which Papas got wholesale from his cousin in Orange Grove. One Easter, Gus Trupshaw had said he could get eggs much cheaper through a connection in Fordsburg. But my father said Papas would not stand for that. The Greeks were very big on Easter.



Other fathers began arriving. They made a barbecue and stood around the fire, watching the meat sizzling on the old garden sieve my father used for a grill. They drank beer. By about eight o'clock, Papas was singing "She'll be comin' round the mountain when she

THE MESSAGE

Alone at last. With him.
Both of us bare-chested. His legs parted. Mine crossed.
Him wearing the hat I stole for him.
I've got the message he's been waiting for,
I tell him. Folded in a green book
in a stapled box in the green car.
I think he nods. I think

in the time it took to get here he changed.
He stares at me, the blue chalk in his fist.
He crumples something in his pocket.
I can't make him speak. I can't make him spin
by clapping my hands behind his head.
Night: the walls collapsing around us.

It takes a day to get here by car.
A day divided into many days
like an animal with dozens of drifting legs.

How did we get here? We played the radio.
We sat by a pit filled with rain.
A blue horse jumped in the tall grass.
We passed through a mile of yellow trees.
A man in the road wore one glove,
waving a flare. At the bottom of the hill
a car burned. Windows blackened and whitened.

The radio tells nothing of any of it.
Alone with him. His finger bleeding.
I could tell him the story of the day of
the storm, the wedding, the ripped shirt and
the broken window. All one long day
like a long high fence.

I'm not afraid of repeating myself.
He found me.
It's so dark I can hear his finger
pointing at me. Which is my cue.

—Mark Levine

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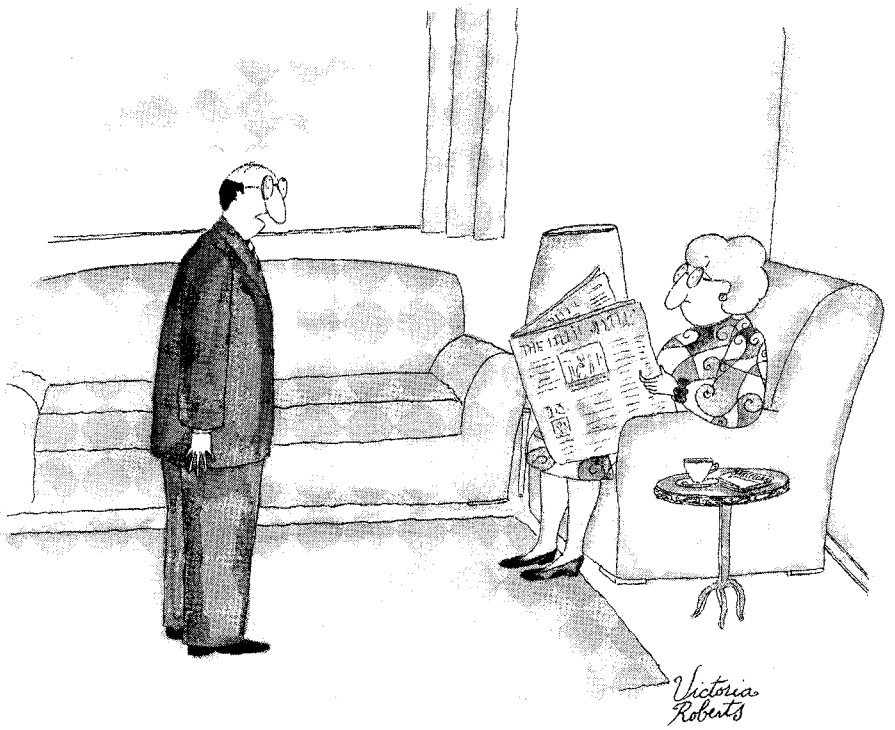
comes." My mother stuck her head out the kitchen window and said, "Excuse me! May I remind you that there are still children present."

Gus Trupshaw called back, "Aye, aye, Captain."

"Right, that's the last straw," my mother said, and sent us to bed.

Later, for what seemed like hours, I lay in my dark bedroom listening to the men calling to each other. I heard my father saying, "Go left, Gus, further left! Dead on target now. That's beautiful." Then Papas would call out, "Am I on course, Gordon?" And my father would shout back, "You're at two o'clock, George. Beautiful. Just hold that position."

Much later, I grew sleepy and it seemed to me that the men in the garden were not men at all. They were planes and tanks moving across the sand in the desert war in North Africa. While, in the yard next door, Tamburlaine keened and whimpered. His long chain, which had been tied to the steel pole that held the washing line, clashed like the waves of a metal sea.



"When I connect the dots, Alice, I don't like what I see."

• •

ON Easter morning, we were out in the garden soon after breakfast. Our fathers stood blinking in the early-morning sunshine, rubbing their eyes and yawning. They had not had time to shave. Mr. Swirsky brought Ruthie to watch her very first African Easter-egg hunt. She told my mother she would never get used to Easter in autumn. South Africa was all upside down. My mother told her to hang on to her hat. *She'd* been living in South Africa all her life, and there was lots she still was not used to. Swirsky smoothed his mustache with a small, soft white hand. He seemed to be stroking the wings of a special bird. Ruthie wore sunglasses. With her red hair and pale skin, she looked very mysterious. None of us had ever seen anyone in sunglasses.

"Ruthie has sensitive eyes," Swirsky said proudly. "Those glasses were specially shipped all the way from England. I kid you not."

One by one, we set off to find our eggs while the men gave us clues. "You're ice-cold, Martin! Your right foot's a bit warmer now. Which one is your right foot? Now your knee is getting rather warm. Oh, Martin, your knee is on fire. Can't you feel the heat, boy?"

Swirsky got carried away and tried to take over from my father. He kept shouting out, "Two o'clock, Martin. Angels at two o'clock!"

When we had all found our chocolate eggs, it was Nicodemus' turn. Nicodemus was our cook and gardener. My father found him in the garage when we moved to Badminton after the war and so we kept him.

"We treat Nicodemus as one of the family," my mother told Ruth Swirsky. "At Christmas and Easter, Nicodemus is always included. We don't have to do it. We choose to do it."

Nicodemus fell on his knees and clapped his hands when my father called him from the kitchen. "No, no, Nicodemus." My mother clicked her tongue. "That's only for Christmas. You have to find your egg in the garden now. Stand up, Nicodemus, and go into the garden." She explained quietly to Ruthie Swirsky, "He's a bit touched in the head. Easter must be a real puzzle. Their customs are very different from ours. But I suppose that's something you well understand."

"You mean, being British?" Ruthie asked.

"Well, that, too," said my mother.

Nicodemus did not understand the "hot" and "cold" directions. He walked about the garden as if he were hunting game. His ears were pricked; his hands were held in little paws in front of his chest. He was very springy on his feet, making little leaps this way and that. He danced across to the rockery. The men shouted, "You're cold, cold, Nicodemus!" Then he went the other way, and they shouted, "You're warm, warmer, Nicodemus!" But Nicodemus didn't listen to them. He went back to the rockery and fell on his knees, and my father said, "Oh, God, not another praying session."

And my mother called out, "Language, Gordon. This is Easter Sunday."

When Nicodemus got to his feet, he had found something. But it wasn't wrapped in silver paper like the other eggs. It was square and black. Gus Trupshaw said, "Now, what the hell have you got there, boy?"

"That's my Maundy-money box," Ruthie said. "Give it to me, Nicodemus." She reached out her hands for it. But Nicodemus fell on his knees again, smiling hugely and happily, and hugged the black wooden box to his chest.

"Happy, happy," said Nicodemus.

"Hell's bells!" I heard my father say. "This could be tricky."

Ruthie said, in her clear English voice, "But this is absurd! Some-

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one make him give me my box."

"He thinks it's finders keepers," Gus Trupshaw said. "Nicodemus thinks he was meant to find it."

"But it doesn't belong to him," Ruthie said. "Somebody stole that box from Salisbury. They must have hidden it in your garden. Salisbury did away with himself because he thought he'd never see that money again. And all the time it was a few feet away." And she began crying.

Swirsky said, "Don't, sweetie. I'll fix it." But from the sound of his voice we knew that there was nothing much to be done.

"Strictly speaking," my mother said when the Swirskys had left, "that box belongs to St. John's Ambulance. It wasn't hers to give away in the first place."

Nicodemus took the black wooden box to his room. He put it on his table with a photograph cut from a newspaper which showed Mussolini in full-dress uniform. "Nicodemus is happy," he told me.

NOBODY else was happy. The cooks and cleaners and gardeners from Badminton Estate took to stopping outside our fence and staring. Someone shouted. A stone was thrown. Nicodemus would rush inside when he saw them and hide under his bed.

Then Gus Trupshaw announced that his maid and several other women who had been washing clothes down by the blue gums had been frightened by a vision of Salisbury. Salisbury wore the belt that he'd used to hang himself. He had come back to haunt them, floating above the ground, skimming along the gravel, belt flying from his neck. He had chased the women all the way up Edward Avenue.

"Flying ghosts at Easter!" my mother said. "What will they think of next? I only hope Ruth Swirsky realizes what she's done. Once they get an idea into their heads like this, they don't let go. We'll have the police here. Mark my words."

In the afternoon, Swirsky arrived and asked to see Nicodemus. Swirsky was wearing a stethoscope and his wife's dark glasses. His chemist's coat was as smooth as an envelope. His mustache was looking oiled again. My mother told him that Nicodemus had locked himself in his room because people were threatening to kill him.

"I intend to fight fire with fire," said Swirsky. Then he went out to Nicodemus' room and knocked on the door.

When he came back, a long time later, Nicodemus was with him. Swirsky looked pale. His mustache was so black it might have been drawn with charcoal. Somehow, he looked undressed. Nicodemus wore Swirsky's white chemist's coat. He wore Ruthie Swirsky's dark glasses and he had Swirsky's stethoscope around his neck. Nicodemus put the stethoscope to his chest and listened proudly to his heart. "Boum, boum, boum," he said.

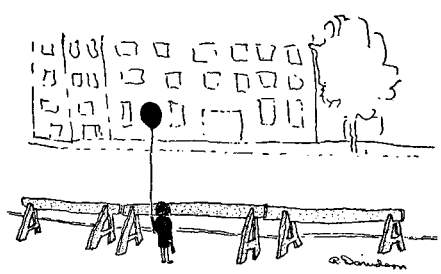
Swirsky carried the St. John's Ambulance box. "Fair exchange, no robbery," said Swirsky. "But he drives a hard bargain, your Nicodemus. If he had a proper chance, he could run the country."

"Would you please keep your voice down?" my mother asked, smiling, and speaking without moving her lips.

Later that afternoon, Sally came round to my place and said that there was a religious meeting in the blue gums. We ran down the hill to the little frothing river in the thick bank of enormous trees. Errol the topsoil man was there. Gus Trupshaw stopped in his new truck. "Is this a church parade?" he asked. "Where's the bally sky pilot?" A crowd of servants waited under the blue gums. Swirsky and his wife arrived in his blue A40. From the back of the car stepped a tall black woman in a red skirt. She was barefoot. She wore great bracelets of beads around her wrists. There were chicken bladders in her hair, like little yellow balloons. There were rows of beads crossed over her chest.

Ruthie Swirsky held up her hand for silence. "This is Ethel," she pointed to the tall woman. "Ethel is a *sangoma*. A witch doctor."

Ethel knelt on the ground. She untied a leather bag that was hanging from her waist. She opened the bag and put it on the ground in front of her. Then she closed her eyes and seemed to go to sleep. With her eyes still closed, she



tipped some bones from the bag into her palms and blew on them—a long, loud breath. She threw them in the dirt as if she were throwing dice. Then she opened her eyes and studied the bones. Next she took from under her arm the wooden St. John's Ambulance box. Swirsky stepped forward, pulling Salisbury's red wagon. The crowd groaned and shivered when they saw that it still carried the brown paper with which Salisbury had lined the bottom: "Buy Your Brand-New Zephyr at Dominion Motors." Ethel shook the collection box. We heard our pennies and sixpences rattling inside. People began clapping softly. Ethel produced a bottle of petrol and a box of matches. In a moment, the box was blazing in the red wagon. No one said a word. We watched until nothing was left but a smell of paint from the red wagon, ashes, and a pile of glowing, smoking coins.

Ethel leaned over and stirred the money to cool it. Everybody was given a piece of money, black from the fire. I got a sixpence. Sally received a shilling. Even Errol the topsoil man got a florin. Examining the scorched money, Swirsky said, "King George doesn't look too pleased—he's got a black eye."

Sally said, "It's like getting coins out of a Christmas pudding."

Then Ethel, the witch doctor, stepped back into the A40.

"I was very moved," Ruthie Swirsky told her.

Ethel lit a Mills cigarette and blew smoke at the roof of the car. "You're welcome," said Ethel.

"Will Salisbury be happy, Mr. Swirsky?" Eric asked.

"We had to make contact," Swirsky said. "That's Ethel's real forte. Making contact. Apparently, the wandering spirit needs some form of direction. This way or that? It's a bit like looking for Easter eggs. Colder? Or warmer? We made a special fire so the spirit of Salisbury could warm itself."

"And the Maundy money I collected was given to the deserving poor. If I'd been allowed to do that in the first place, none of this would have happened," said Ruthie Swirsky.

My mother said, when I showed her my blackened sixpence, "Don't try and spend it, Martin. Scorched coins are not legal tender. Ask your father."

—CHRISTOPHER HOPE

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PROFILES

JUNGLE BOTANIST

[He] betook himself to one of the wildest and least known of jungle areas of the world, to spend fourteen years of his life in hard physical work, constant exposure to the tropical elements and diseases, insufficient diet, and complete lack of even rudimentary comforts. A scholar with a thorough classical training and of outstanding cultural and scientific attainments, he divorced himself from all centres of culture and lived for long periods amongst Indians or unlettered half-breeds. A superb correspondent, he plunged himself into regions where, for months on end, he received not one letter or newspaper. . . . A mild-mannered and dignified person, he feared none of the dangers that his expeditions presented. . . . And, perhaps most astonishing of all: a naturalist who looked with abhorrence on the philosophy that nothing not immediately beneficial to man was worthy of study, he . . . filled his note-books with observations and studies on all manner of native economic plants, including gums and resins, fibres, foods, drugs, narcotics and stimulants, oils, dyes, and timbers.

PEOPLE who follow the twining trails of botany could take that to be a testimonial to Richard Evans Schultes, a Harvard professor emeritus and this country's ranking ethnobotanist. But Schultes was the writer, and his subject was a nineteenth-century English explorer of the Amazon, Richard Spruce, in whose footsteps Schultes has long trodden. Over his own nearly fourteen Amazon years, most of them spent in narcotics-ridden Colombia, Schultes—who has probably sampled a greater assortment of hallucinogens than any of his students ever fantasized about—had his share of Spruce-like hardships. Once, he had to help paddle a canoe for forty days, his arms and legs growing increasingly numb, in order to reach a doctor better equipped than any shaman to treat him for beriberi.

In urban life, Schultes, for all his firsthand acquaintance with drugs, has remained relatively detached from his North American neighbors' concerns about their destructive use. His own concerns have been largely pedagogical and medicinal. In more than a dozen books and in hundreds of articles he has reminded readers that, of the world's several hundred thousand species of plants, about eight thousand have, at one time or another, been accorded therapeutic value. The Chinese alone, back in the sixteenth century, listed a thousand species in their materia medica; present-day traditional doctors in China still call upon many of them. Now that the bark of the Pacific yew tree has been proved adversarial to ovarian cancer, scientists like Schultes hope, not unreasonably, that somewhere, out in some forest, there stand, waiting to be discovered and embraced, cures for Alzheimer's and AIDS. Why not? Hasn't Sean Connery, after all, already discovered on-screen an Amazonian cure for cancer in "Medicine Man"?

Today, the health problems of three-quarters of the human population are attended to, if at all, exclusively with medicines derived from plants. It is no wonder that Schultes sometimes seems to look upon the jungle, in which he once remained without a break for an entire year, as the equivalent of a neighborhood pharmacy. In his admittedly biased view, even such items of conventionally ill repute as marijuana, peyote, and cocaine belong on the pharmacy's shelves. Marijuana has proved efficacious against the nausea that can be a side effect of chemotherapy, and until March, when the Public Health Service high-handedly changed the rules, the number of patients legally smoking pot in order to treat symptoms of glaucoma and AIDS was growing. Mescaline, a derivative of peyote, has been employed by psychiatrists—mainly European ones—to hasten the flow of revealing information from their patients. As for cocaine, Schultes wrote as recently as 1990, in a magazine article, that in Richard Spruce's day it had been "recommended in Western medicine as an excellent local anesthetic," and he added, "It is still valuable, especially in ophthalmological and ear, nose, and throat surgery." He did feel constrained to explain, for the benefit of those unfamiliar with the nuances of narcotics, that "it is the use of the purified alkaloid—not the aboriginal employment of the leaves or powder as a masticatory among South American Indians—that may lead to dangerous addiction." And in 1972 he had asked, with a wistful eye to the future, "Could we ever have dared predict that the intensely poisonous false hellebore, employed by certain North American Indians to choose a new chieftain through a dangerous and sometimes fatal intoxication of young braves, would yield a valuable hypertensive agent?"

NOW seventy-seven and retired from on-the-spot jungle research, Schultes lives in suburban Massachusetts. He wears dark-wool three-piece suits and steel-rimmed spectacles, which, combined with a stately bearing and a fringe of white hair, give him the look of a sedentary Ivy League mentor. In the Amazon, however, when the Indians he consorted with went about near-naked, so did he. Until Schultes came along, many of them had never seen a white person, let alone one who, at six feet one, towered over all but a very few of them. The name that certain tribesmen gave him was their word for "father," and until he could persuade them of his mortality some took him for a heavenly father. Others, considering his singular appearance and alien paraphernalia (pencils, notebooks, Band-Aids), conferred on him their equivalent of the title "white witch doctor."

Schultes may be the only living person to have more than two million

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acres of the Earth named after him—Sector Schultes, an Amazonian tract thus formally designated in 1986 by the Colombian government. Though by far the largest, this tract is only one of dozens of entities that bear his name. He is proud that among the plants considered pharmacologically noteworthy by shamans who prescribe and administer them in Amazonia—a region that Schultes, despite all he has endured there, calls "green heaven"—are, to mention just a few, *Pouroma schultesii* (the ashes from its burned bark are used by several tribes along the Río Piraparana to treat ulcers), *Piper schultesii* (the Karijonas find a hot tea brewed from its stems and leaves effective against tubercular coughs), *Marasmius schultesii* (a powder from this mushroom, to be applied only in the evening and to be washed off the next morning, is treasured by Taiwanos suffering from eardrum fungus), *Virola schultesii* (the Taiwanos find the ashes from the burned bark of this tree helpful against cuts and other wounds), *Justicia schultesii* (the roots of which form the basis of a Makuna remedy for skin afflictions of the groin), and *Hiraea schultesii* (a wash from its leaves is advocated by the resourceful Makunas—though its North American name-sharer has misgivings about side effects—for the relief of severe conjunctivitis).

Beyond mere species, Schultes has also left his nomenclatural mark on genera. His 1990 book "The Healing Forest: Medicinal and Toxic Plants of the Northwest Amazonia"—on which the phytochemist Robert Raffauf collaborated, and which has a foreword by Prince Philip, in his capacity as president of the World Wide Fund for Nature—deals with fifteen hundred and sixteen species belonging to five hundred and ninety-six genera in a hundred and forty-five families. The genera named after Schultes are *Schultesiophyton*, used as raw material for panama hats; *Schultesianthis*, a member of the family to which the potato and the deadly nightshade belong; and a genus that its discoverer had to dub *Resia* (from the honoree's initials) instead of *Schultesia*, because the latter had been preëmpted by a German botanist in the eighteen-thirties. The name *Schultesia* was entomologically available, however, and was given, in 1967, to a cockroach.

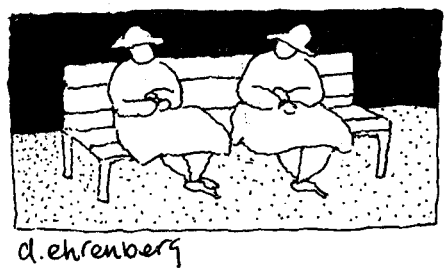
BUBBLES

We are—not for ever but the moment—blowing bubbles
in the kitchen. The trick is to catch
these floating tears of light on the tongue:
my daughter's screeches of joy
flying out the open door as each one pops and leaves
the tiniest mite of light and soap, brief
sharp aftertaste in the mouth. I'm remembering
as we play this game of beauty and bitter taste
how my mother in the home of slow bodies
would sing without smiling—every second Wednesday,
when the man with the accordion came—
the same song: eyes empty, a little glazed,
microphone cumbersome between hand and mouth,
her worried voice almost inaudible
under the music. But bravely
she'd whisper-sing, shoulders swaying,
until she got to *They'd fly so high*,
where always she'd forget the words
and hum the air, poor eyes searching
while the others murmured a chorus, stared off,
or just nodded—holding absently any hand
that had been offered. She'd stop,
then sit to a sprinkle of applause, the accordion
crescendo, burst bubbles ghosting the air
as I squeezed her arm: those bright nothings
marking as they wink out our little time.

—Eamon Grennan

• •

That year, Schultes accompanied an Amazonian expedition sponsored by the National Science Foundation. The leader was the late Harvard entomologist Carroll Williams, who had invited Schultes because of his knowledge of Brazil and of jungles. On the expedition, Dr. Louis M. Roth, a cockroach expert who is now with Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology but was then affiliated with a United States Army research laboratory at Natick, Massachusetts, accompanied Schultes into the rain forest in a dugout canoe to search for indigenous members of the order *Blattaria*. At first, they sighted no bugs, only birds—creatures that Schultes has never evinced interest in. (He has said that he considers birds just about as boring as bird-watchers.) But then they spotted provocative nests hanging from the trees around them.



As Schultes recalls the episode, he instructed a young Indian assistant to climb up and inspect the contents of the nests but not to touch them if they contained baby birds; and he remarked, "Wouldn't your damned cockroaches love all the bird shit in those nests!" There were no baby birds, but there were three-inch-long roaches so plump and so rare as to quicken any entomological pulse. Their ilk has been known as *Schultesia* ever since. For quite a while, Schultes carried a snapshot of a cockroach in his wallet, as a lesser man might carry one of a grandchild. Few visitors to his home leave without being shown a portrait of a mounted specimen, or, failing that, being told of the time that, at a Harvard reception for a Nobel Prize winner, Schultes declared, "There must be about seventeen scientists in this room with a Nobel, but there's only one with a cockroach named after him."

Schultes seldom makes jokes at Harvard's expense. He is what's known as an ibid—someone who has earned all his academic degrees at the same institution. In his case, the degrees, all from Harvard, are A.B. (in 1937), A.M. (in 1938), and Ph.D. (in 1941).

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CROSSED PATHS

Giacometti Meets Olive Oyl

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Harvard has figured so prominently in his adult life that his wife, Dorothy, a retired opera singer, often says that she has had to be content with being his third love, after the university and botany. When they got married, in 1959, he picked Cuba for their honeymoon, because Harvard had a botanical garden there. Whenever he is booked to lecture at Yale, he grouses—even though he has a son on its faculty—about "slumming," and dons what he calls his mourning necktie, the blackest on his rack. He is co-editor of a series of books, Psychoactive Plants of the World, published by the Yale University Press. He sort of hopes nobody will notice.

RICHARD SPRUCE, who died in 1893, did not know he was an ethnobotanist. The term came into fashion a decade or so after his death, to describe a scientist bridging the gap between botany and anthropology, by linking human beings of a specific region and their dependence—medicinal and hallucinogenic, in large part—on the indigenous plant life. "Ethnobotanist" is credited to John W. Harshberger, a botanist at the University of Pennsylvania, who in coining the word stressed the importance of getting acquainted with primitive races and "the plants which they have found available in their economic life, in order that perchance the valuable properties they have utilized in their wild life may fill some vacant niche in our own." Prince Philip once called Schultes the founding father of ethnobotany, but when Schultes—whose own most recent definition of the word is "the complete registration of the uses of and concepts about plant life in primitive societies . . . comprising aspects of botany, anthropology, archeology, plant chemistry, pharmacology, history, geography, and sundry other tangential fields of the sciences and arts"—tries to enlighten laymen about precisely what it is that he does he says, "I'm just a jungle botanist."

The *Times Literary Supplement*, in a review of one of Schultes's hefty works (he has described a nearly five-hundred-page tome of his as "these notes"), deplored the unscholarly omission of an index but nonetheless called him "a true ethnobotanist, the incarnation and almost the inventor of this discipline." Schultes rather liked that "incarnation." Surely, he thought, it was an allusion to his relationship to Richard Spruce, who, he has written, "typified that all-around scientist and man of culture that unfortunately, in this modern period of overspecialization and compartmentalization, is so sorely missed and so urgently needed." Didn't he and Spruce, after all—middle names aside—have the same initials? The same first name? Once, the American was hesitantly asked by a friend whether he thought he had in any way patterned his career, subconsciously or unconsciously, on that of the Englishman. "Neither," Schultes said. "Consciously." The title he gave to one of his many glowing tributes to his forerunner—an article in the magazine *Northern Gardener*—was "Richard Spruce Still Lives."

Spruce was born in 1817, not quite

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a century before Schultes, in Ganthorpe, Yorkshire, on the property of Lord Howard, whose castle would, more than a century and a half later, be used as a sizable prop for the TV series "Brideshead Revisited." The young Yorkshireman became a teacher, but in 1844, at twenty-seven, he got permanently sidetracked into mosses. Before he was through, he had pursued these so ardently in the Pyrenees that he came up with seventeen previously unrecorded species. Later, feeling depressed in the South American bush, he wrote, "I found reason to thank heaven which had enabled me to forget the moment of my troubles in the contemplation of a simple moss."

Spruce first set his sights on Latin America when he was in his early thirties. He landed at Belém, just south of the mouth of the Amazon, in July, 1849, and stayed in South America, with no transatlantic furlough, until 1864. One round trip inland from the Brazilian river port of Manaus up and down the Rio Negro took three years. Schultes has written:

> There can be no doubt but that this odyssey represents the pinnacle of botanical expeditions in South America. Not only from the point of view of the amount and quality of plant material gathered, the number of new species and genera discovered, phytogeographical observations and investigations of an anthropological, ethnobotanical, linguistic, geographic, and meteorological nature, but also from the sheer physical undertaking and the demonstrations—too numerous to recount—of a moral stamina which beat down and overcame sickness, hunger, weariness, and loneliness—from all these points of view, Spruce's Rio Negro trip cannot be matched in the annals of natural history in South America.

No matter how far Spruce travelled, his mail eventually caught up with him. One accumulation of letters reached him in a Peruvian mountain village called Tarapoto. "In it was a letter from Her Majesty's Colonial Secretary," Schultes says, his hackles rising. "Queen Victoria had people around whose knowledge of geography was as limited as that of our State Department today. The letter instructed Spruce to go to a part of Ecuador nine thousand feet up, to procure the best strains of quinine, so they could get rich growing it commercially on plantations in Ceylon and Malaya. Spruce obediently set forth. It took him three months to get there. He spent four years in Ecuador, some of that time in awful health. But the seeds he reaped—from which, incidentally, he earned not tuppence—were to have a profound effect on the health of much of the rest of the globe."

Spruce, like Schultes in his turn, became deeply interested in narcotics, and in the Indians' reliance on them for both hallucinogenic and medicinal purposes. (The two men did differ in one important respect: Schultes regards the Indians of his acquaintance as real friends; Spruce didn't much take to those he knew.) In 1851, Spruce was the first outsider to come upon and carefully examine ayahuasca, a drink made from the plant *Banisteriopsis*, and also called, variously, yajé, pinde, natém, and—one of its more popular cognomens—caapi. Many Indians characterize the plant as "the vine of the soul," and believe that to drink its juice is, as one of them told Spruce, "to return to the maternal womb, to the source and origin of all things." Paintings made by Tukano Indians under its influence have frequently incorporated an anaconda or two, reflecting the local belief that their progenitors descended from the Milky Way in a canoe hauled by one of the big snakes, and brought with them three life-sustaining substances: caapi; tapioca, for food; and coca, to alleviate hunger when food was scarce. Schultes, like Spruce before him, was often grateful for coca over lean and hungry stretches.

Schultes was no less beguiled by caapi. It is the hero of his most recent book, "The Vine of the Soul," subtitled "Medicine Men, Their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazon." The book is another collaboration with Robert Raffauf, who is a retired professor of pharmacognosy and medicinal chemistry at Northeastern University. The two men have known each other for almost forty years, and have made several Amazonian treks together. Some of their contemporaries consider it only justice that, after all their arduous researches in the wild, Schultes and Raffauf were invited to polish their manuscripts on the me-ticulously cultivated grounds of the Rockefeller Foundation's sybaritic Villa Serbelloni, at Bellagio, Italy.

"O.K., folks, let's move along. I'm sure you've all seen someone qualify for a loan before."

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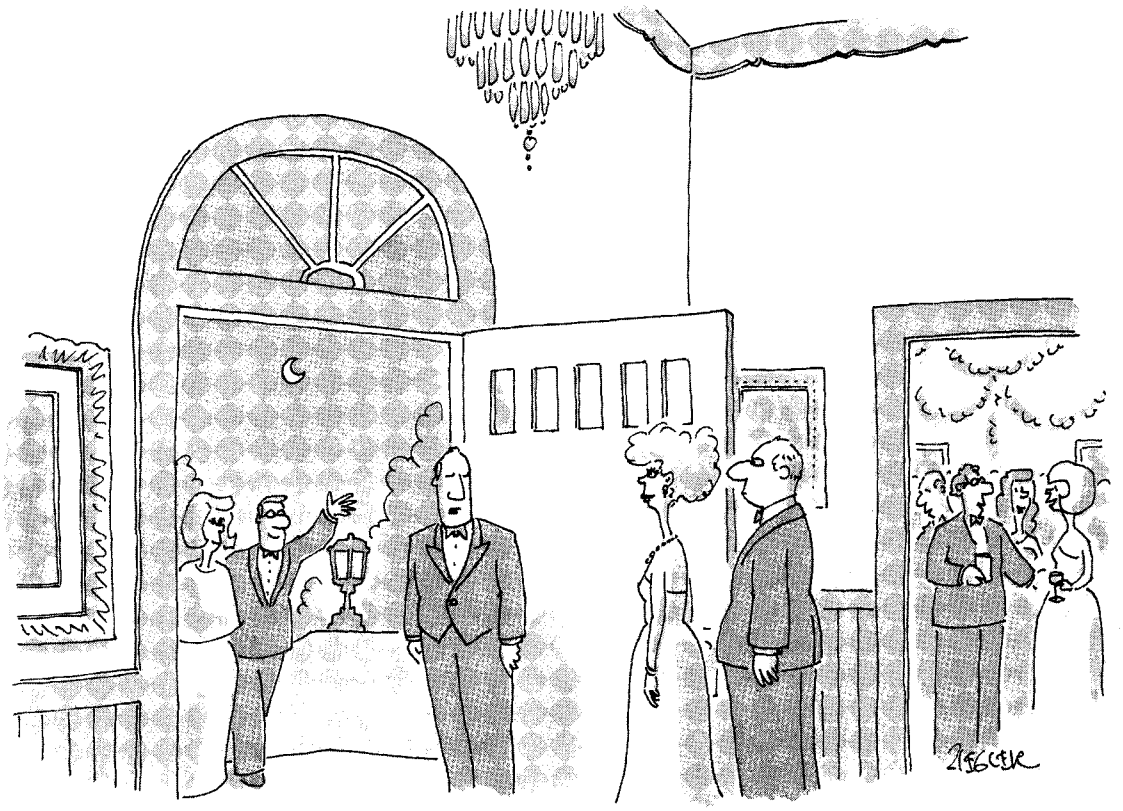

"These are your friends the Erskines, sir. Madam kisses both of them. You kiss her and you shake his hand. Then you wink and say, 'Hey, how about those Yankees?' "

• •

In "Richard Spruce Still Lives" Schultes said that "Spruce's interest in caapi and his willingness to experiment with the then unknown narcotic sets forth clearly that deep-rooted curiosity in natural things which makes him one of the peers among naturalist-explorers," and he passed along Spruce's account of one caapi festival:

> I had scarcely dispatched one cup of the nauseous beverage, which is but half the dose, when the ruler of the feast—desirous, apparently, that I should taste all his delicacies at once—came up with a woman bearing a large calabash of caxiri (mandioca beer), of which I must needs take a copious draught, and as I knew the mode of its preparation, it was gulped down with secret loathing. Scarcely had I accomplished this feat when a large cigar, 2 feet long and as thick as the wrist, was put lighted into my hand, and etiquette demanded that I should take a few whiffs of it—*I*, who had never in my life smoked a cigar or a pipe of tobacco. Above all this, I must drink a large cup of palm-wine, and it will readily be understood that the effect of such a complex dose was a strong inclination to vomit, which was only overcome by lying down in a hammock and drinking a cup of coffee which the friend who accompanied me had taken the precaution to prepare beforehand.

Schultes went on, "With Spruce's long and detailed account of this intoxicant and its use began a continuous series of researches . . . of a plant which one day may be of promise in medicine, due to its weird properties." Schultes himself was subsequently in the forefront of that research, and when he disclosed *his* experiences he usually made it clear that they weren't entirely enjoyable, either, and that he, too, shied away from a full-strength dose of anything—a precaution he cited, a little sadly, as a plausible reason that he, unlike his Indian friends, had never encountered a jaguar while under a spell.

Schultes's sequential, small-dose research was no more fun than Spruce's:

> My own experiences from participation in many Amazonian *Banisteriopsis* rituals might be summarized by saying that the intoxication began with a feeling of giddiness and nervousness, soon followed by nausea, occasional vomiting and profuse perspiration. Occasionally, the vision was disturbed by flashes of light and, upon closing the eyes, a bluish haze sometimes appeared. A period of abnormal lassitude then set in during which colours increased in intensity. Sooner or later a deep sleep interrupted by dream-like sequences began. The only uncomfortable after-effect noted was intestinal upset and diarrhoea on the following day. At no time was movement of the limbs adversely affected. In fact, amongst many Amazonian Indians, dancing forms part of the caapi-ritual.

He did not reveal whether he himself ever felt up to dancing on such occasions.

In 1864, Spruce finally returned to England, sick and broke. Toward the end of his life, he could barely move about, and he had to make do with a hundred-pound-a-year pension, most of his meagre savings having vanished in the collapse of an Ecuadoran bank. While he was still abroad, he had written to a friend back home:

> I have been too constant to botany; several times in the course of my travels I might have taken to some occupation far more lucrative; and I have met many men who, beginning without a cent, have made more money in two or three years than I in the thirteen, and that without being exposed to thunderstorms and pelting rain, sitting in a canoe up to the knees in water, eating of bad and scanty food once a day, getting no sleep at night from the attacks of venomous insects, to say nothing of the certainty of having every now and then to look death in the face, as I have done. Excuse these personal details, which I have not entered into with any hope or desire of exciting sympathy, but simply to explain that, although still in the midst of objects interesting to the enquirer into the productions and processes of nature, I can pay little heed to them.

That was too much for Schultes. "Too constant to botany!" he spluttered in "Richard Spruce Still Lives." "Spruce himself never really meant to say this. He would have chosen the same course were a new life opened to him—because he was fired by a God-given urge to live with nature and to try to understand the mysteries of earth's green cover. How much better off are all we who have followed him that he was so constant to botany. Of no man can Juvenal's words be more truly spoken: *Scire volunt omnes, mercedem solvere nemo.*" ("Everyone wants to know, no one to pay the price.")

Spruce, in his day, was credited with collecting some ten thousand speci-

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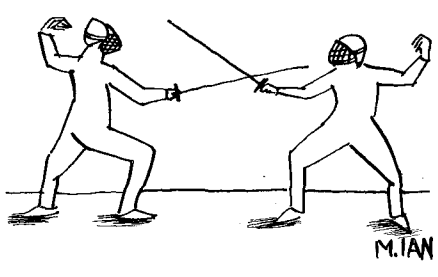
mens of plants. Over a like period, Schultes ran up more than twice as many—in at least one instance at the same place. "I may have touched some of the very trees he collected," Schultes said not long ago, in tones verging on the worshipful. "There was this one riverbank Spruce mentioned, where he got out of a canoe, and there was this rock that resembled a sitting frog, and a hundred and fifty paces away to the north-northwest, in white sand, there was a caatinga"—a forest of thorny trees—"that Spruce wrote up. I like to think that I collected from some of the same trees that he did."

SCHULTES, who was born on January 12, 1915, first heard of Richard Spruce when he was six or seven, and was living outside Boston, in Roxbury. At that time, he was confined to bed for six months with a troublesome stomach—hardly a promising start for a jungle explorer. His parents read to him a lot during this siege, and one of their offerings which especially impressed him included excerpts from Spruce's "Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes."

Schultes, who likes to describe himself as, depending on the circumstances and his mood, a fourth- or fifth- or even sixth-generation Bostonian, is indisputably third-generation American, if not Bostonian. His paternal grandparents moved to the United States from Prussia, late in the nineteenth century. Otto Richard Schultes, Richard's father, fell somewhat short of being a proper Bostonian—he was born in Hoboken. He made and installed the plumbing for brewery vats (Roxbury had five breweries), and when in 1901 he went to South Africa it was to spend a year supervising the vats at a new Natal brewery. This experience may have been the high point of an otherwise fairly ordinary life: natty in white suit and pith helmet, the young man tooled around Durban in a rickshaw pulled by a Zulu with a headdress sporting two horns. During Prohibition, Otto settled in East Boston and went into the plumbing-and-heating business. He was hardy. Taken to a hospital at eighty-eight with a complicated case of cancer, he was given such good care ("The doctor was a Harvard Medical School grad, of course," his son says) that he went home and enjoyed another five years. He died, at ninety-three, after he insisted on going out for the morning paper during a blizzard, got stuck in a snowbank, and succumbed to pneumonia.

Richard's mother, née Maude Bagley, was also second generation, and came from no less sturdy but far less lucky stock. Her father, descended from English sheep farmers, supported his six children adequately as a master mechanic, but while he was walking along a railroad trestle from their East Boston home to his Chelsea workplace one winter day he lost his balance, fell into the bay beneath him, and drowned. Her mother and her two older sisters had to go to work to support the family. The future Mrs. Schultes attended secretarial college and then became an office girl in a firm that made navigational equipment for boats. Two of her brothers, who were younger, in time made respectable headway in Massachusetts political circles. One acquired a farm at Townsend, in the northeastern part of the state. When the Schultes household came to visit, the uncle would lend Richard a floral guide, and the boy—even then something of a loner with a botanical flair—would go out and collect leaves and press them between its pages. Friends of Schultes's with acute hindsight have wondered whether even back then he might have been exhibiting signs of possessing what scholars call "the taxonomic eye": the knack—some think it can be inherited—of being able to detect at a glance something new and different, some morphological variation, in a plant. "Somebody like Dick Schultes can go into a jungle and brush by zillions of things that he knows he knows, and then spot something that holds his eye," a botanical colleague said recently. "An exciting moment like that is, for him, a kind of epiphany."

Richard went through the East Boston public-school system. His parents would have preferred the vaunted Boston Latin School, but their doctor thought the boy's protracted illness made long trips by public transport undesirable. He got into Harvard anyway, and won a scholarship for the four-hundred-dollar tuition. Even so, it would have been difficult for his family to afford the cost of a dormitory room his freshman year, and, with the doctor's grudging concurrence, he commuted. He earned pocket money as a file clerk, for forty-five cents an hour, at Harvard's Botanical Museum, a dowdy red brick edifice on Oxford Street which is best known as the repository of the university's celebrated glass flowers. More than a quarter of a century later, Schultes was appointed the museum's director, and became the flowers' chief custodian.



Richard cut a modest swath as an undergraduate. His principal extracurricular affiliations were the Botanical Club and the Unity Club (a Unitarian organization). He did display a talent for languages. He took four years of German and one of Swedish. (In high school, he had taken French and Greek, and after Harvard he added Spanish, Portuguese, Makuna, and Witoto to his repertory.) And, all along—luckily—there has been Latin. Botany's rules are unbending. By international agreement, its elders, the last scientists to hold out, insist that anything new discovered in their bailiwick be described, the first time around, in Latin. (About ten years ago, Schultes took a six-page paper about a discovery of his to the botanical museum's printing office, and when the compositor saw that it was in Latin, and grumbled, the professor said, "You're a Roman Catholic. You should know Latin." The compositor replied, "The Church threw it out the window, and you damn-fool botanists had to go and keep it.") "I'm terrible on names unless they're the Latin names of plants," Schultes says as a senior citizen. One of the qualities he admired about the ever-hovering ghost of Richard Spruce was that a catalogue of mosses Spruce had assembled was "written in an impeccable technical Latin." Schultes professes to hate math. "I can't do anything abstract, and math is abstract," he says. He skipped it in favor of biology, as tangible a subject as he could imagine. A lecture course he took, Biology 104, turned out to be the most meaningful of his college career and, come to that, of the rest of his academic life.

Biology 104 dated back to 1874, which, as it happened, was the birth date of one of only four men to teach it over its hundred-and-eleven-year history—Oakes Ames. Professor Ames

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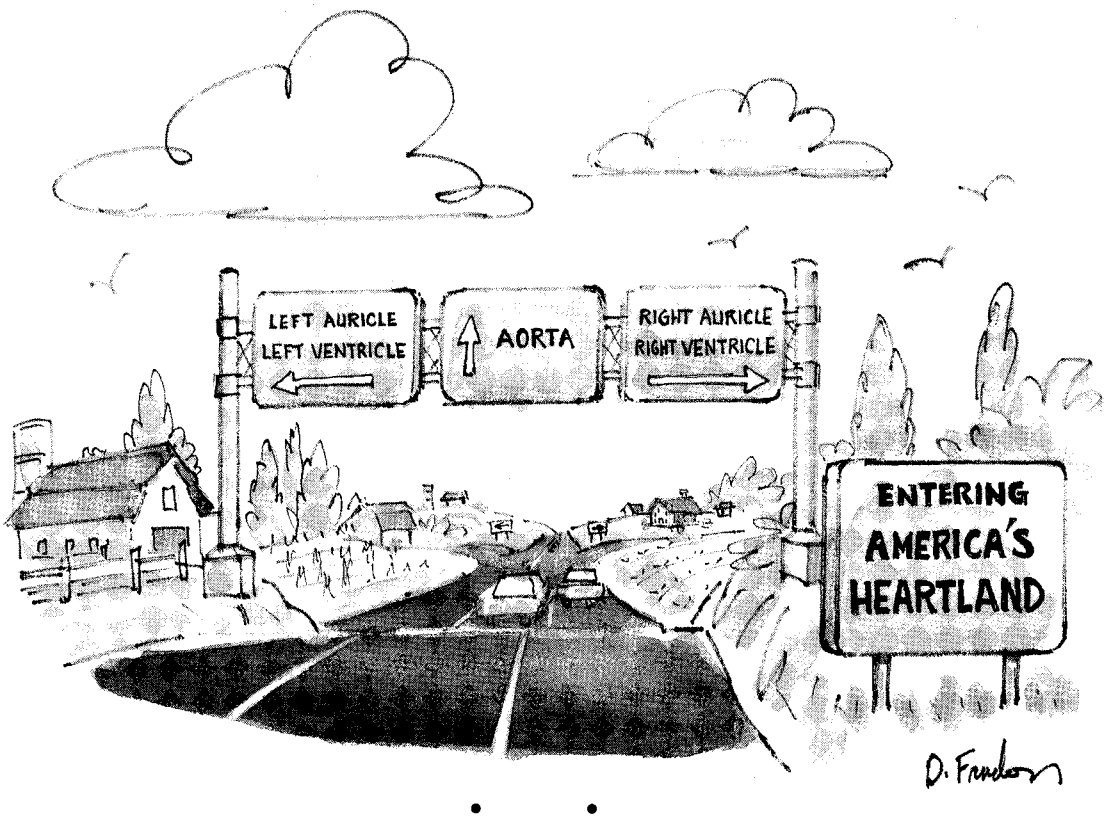

had reportedly shown his mettle as a boy by memorizing the name of a new plant every day. When Schultes enrolled in the course, in 1935, Ames not only was a well-known economic botanist but held several university administrative positions, including that of supervisor of the Botanical Museum. He also had a worldwide reputation as an orchidologist. His enthusiasm in that field of inquiry was catching. In 1966, more than thirty years after attending Ames's class, Schultes, by then an Honorary Life Member of the American Orchid Society, was accorded the distinction of publishing an article about orchids for the Encyclopædia Britannica. Schultes, to whom Ames, an authentic multigenerational Bostonian, became a kind of father figure, in time selected the elder orchidologist's surname as a middle name for one of his children, and a tree with intoxicating leaves which he had seen in a South American witch doctor's garden he named *Methysticodendron amesianum*.

As an undergraduate, Schultes read and was fascinated by a treatise on peyote, the stubby, spineless cactus that some North American Indians—principally those adhering to the Native American Church—referred to as "the divine intoxicant." (They often bowed as they walked past one.) That seemed a promising topic for a thesis, and Schultes sought and got his professor's blessing. In fact, Ames went well beyond approval. Schultes had never been west of the Hudson, and the nearest known place in which to study peyote was Oklahoma. Ames said he might be able to wangle some funds to underwrite a Schultes trip out there, and he did; Schultes later learned that they came out of Ames's pocket. Schultes found himself a suitable travelling companion—a graduate student in anthropology at Yale (Schultes was more broad-minded then) named Weston La Barre, who later became a professor at Duke. La Barre found the excursion rewarding: his Ph.D. dissertation, "The Peyote Cult," has by his last count gone through thirteen commercial printings, and not only to slake the literary thirst of curious hippies. La Barre recently said, "I am told that when a new chapter of the Native American Church is planned in a tribe, they assiduously consult 'The Peyote Cult' in order to do it correctly. What if the young student had made a mistake?" Schultes's thesis—"Peyote (*Lophophora williamsii*) and Its Uses"—had a more limited readership: chiefly, Professor Ames.

During a month in Anadarko, Oklahoma, the two young men kept careful track of what they saw and heard and smelled and tasted. Even then, Schultes took pains to note, he consumed smaller portions of peyote than his Indian companions—though this was hardly of consequence, he also wanted it known, because peyote was "a completely innocuous narcotic, not habit-forming." Neither Schultes nor La Barre ingested enough of the drug to converse with ancestors, as the Indians assured them *they* did. Schultes's reminiscences, compared with some of his later ones, were far from stomach-turning: "Peyote intoxication . . . is characterized especially by indescribably brilliant coloured visions in kaleidoscopic movement. These visual hallucinations are often accompanied by auditory, taste, olfactory and tactile hallucinations. Sensations of weightlessness, macroscopia, depersonalization, doubling of the ego, alteration of loss of time perception and other rather unearthly effects are normally experienced."

Already interested in the medicinal potential of plants, Schultes observed the application of peyote or its derivatives, seemingly with good results, to burned skin and to aching teeth. (In "The Peyote Cult," however, La Barre is somewhat skeptical of peyote's medical efficacy, and points out that some of its reported curative effects could result from its hallucinogenic properties.) Back in Cambridge, early in 1937—his senior year—Schultes continued his research; in a Botanical Museum leaflet he wrote that although those who considered peyote an aphrodisiac were mistaken, "there are few diseases known to the Indians for which peyote is not believed to be a cure," and he specified, "Among the many diseases listed by my Indian informants were tuberculosis, pneumonia, influenza, intestinal ills, scarlet fever, diabetes, rheumatic pains, colds, and especially grippe; some even included venereal diseases."

The subject of Schultes's Ph.D. thesis was "The Economic Aspects of the Flora of Northeastern Oaxaca," a province of southern Mexico, which he visited from time to time—now on his anthropological own—between 1938 and 1940. (Meanwhile, he had become a

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teaching assistant in Biology 104.) His interest in Oaxacan plants stemmed from the writings of some sixteenth-century Spanish explorers: they reported what they had observed about teonanacatl, a hallucinogenic mushroom that Indians far and wide viewed as sacred and, specifically, as "the flesh of the gods." The reports also made Schultes eager to investigate a regional vine of the morning-glory family called ololiuqui. Its seeds were psychoactive, and had a numbing effect on human beings who chewed and swallowed them. Ololiuqui, like peyote, also appeared to be medically useful. (Two of its components are now used in modern drugs.) Once Schultes's report on ololiuqui was available in nonacademic circles, he assumed, pharmaceutical companies would surely follow up on it. But, aside from Oakes Ames and a few other scholars, nobody seemed to care. That was only one of sundry disappointments —a major one being that he hadn't had a chance actually to taste the flesh of the gods in Oaxaca. He later explained to the readers of a United Nations *Bulletin on Narcotics* that "so few mushrooms were gathered, because of the unusually dry season, that it was not possible for me to ingest them experimentally: all were needed"—here science had taken precedence over self—"as voucher herbarium specimens."

His doctoral thesis had an unexpected sequel: in 1953, twelve years after its acceptance, it found an interested off-campus reader in a fifty-four-year-old Morgan Guaranty Trust vice-president whose avocation was mushrooms. The mycologist, Robert Gordon Wasson, headed for Oaxaca. He was luckier than Schultes had been. Hallucinogenic mushrooms were abundant enough for Wasson to nibble on some fresh ones and send some to Switzerland to be chemically analyzed by Albert Hofmann, the phytochemist who in 1938 had synthesized LSD—a man whom Schultes (later his friend and collaborator) had not yet met. Dr. Hofmann, always ready to play the role of guinea pig, ingested a bit himself, under controlled conditions. "Whether my eyes were closed or open, I saw only Mexican motifs and colours," he recounted in a scientific paper. "When the doctor supervising the experiment bent over me to check my blood pressure, he was transformed into an Aztec priest, and I would not have been astonished if he had drawn an obsidian knife."

IN the summer of 1941, right after getting his Ph.D., Schultes returned briefly to Mexico. A group of Harvard professors had been asked by the Rockefeller Foundation to go to Mexico to determine whether it should get heavily involved in agriculture there, and although his Spanish was not fluent, Schultes was dispatched to act as their translator. (Their findings were favorable, and the foundation went ahead.) Schultes stayed in Mexico long enough to improve his Spanish and his horseback riding—or, more precisely, mule-back riding—and then, with Ames as intermediary, he accepted a National Research Council grant to proceed to Amazon country and look into curare, a substance whose numbing properties surgeons of the Northern Hemisphere had been increasingly interested in since the isolation, in 1897, of the alkaloid d-tubocurarine, a muscle relaxant that is still in preoperative use today.

Schultes's introduction to Colombia was not heartening. An airplane taking him from Mexico City to Bogotá had engine trouble and made an emergency landing at the small city of Turbo. It was an unattractive site. Half a century later, what Schultes remembers best about it is that it harbored a dismayingly large number of sick-looking dogs. "I thought, God, what a horrible country!" he says.

Bogotá was different. He arrived on a Sunday, when the Institute of Natural Sciences, which had been alerted to his visit, was closed. It was a warm, cloudless day. The only dogs in sight seemed to be pampered house pets. First-day impressions can last a long time, and Schultes likes to recall that, after checking into a hotel, he wandered around the capital, taking in a band concert and a parade of military-academy students. Then he spotted some open-sided streetcars. He hadn't seen any since he'd last been in Boston, and, nostalgically, he hopped aboard one. He had no idea where it was going.

"But you are running an empire. The Empire of Phil."

On the outskirts of town, at the foot of a hill lush with foliage, some nuns escorting a flock of children got off—perhaps, he mused, for an instructive nature walk. He got off, too, and as they began to climb he followed them, taxonomic eye to the ground. Here was a bunch of epiphytes—mostly ferns. But what was that over there? It was a clump of tiny orchids, barely an inch

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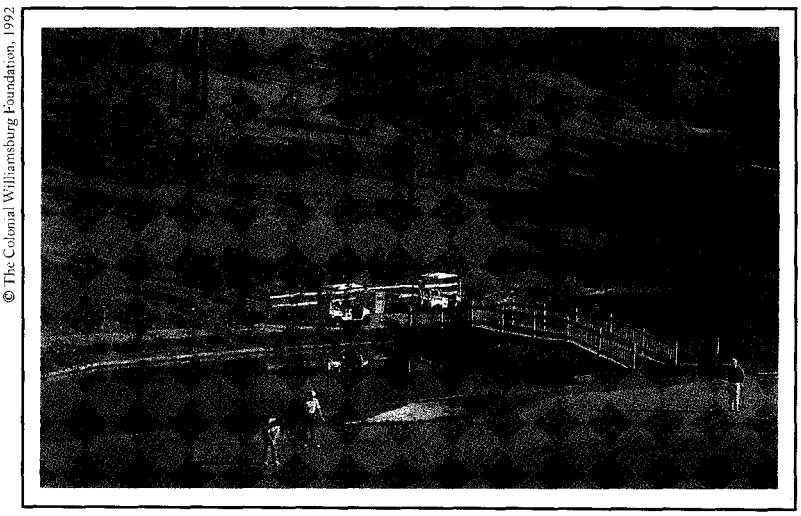
high. He had never seen or heard of anything like them. Since he had no collecting equipment with him, he tenderly plucked a few blossoms and tucked them between the pages of his passport. Later, he mailed them off to Professor Ames. It turned out that Schultes, on his very first day in Bogotá, had stumbled across a previously unclassified orchidological species. Ames dubbed it *Pachiphyllum schultesii*. "Here I was, taking a penny trolley-car ride in a strange city, and I made a discovery," Schultes says today. "I thought, God, what a wonderful country!"

At the institute, Schultes met Hernando Garcia-Barriga, a Colombian botanist who was about to go into the countryside for a short stay. He invited the newcomer to accompany him. The trip proved rewarding in an unexpected way: Garcia-Barriga knew very little English, and Schultes's Spanish further improved. Schultes remembers being impressed by his companion's telling him more than once that when he got to spend time with Indians he should bear in mind that they seemed to have some sixth sense enabling them to divine which of their many plants—marvellous plants, he said—to call upon when they fell ill.

Richard Spruce had travelled, when there was no watercourse, mostly on foot or on horseback. By the time Schultes came along, the explorer's lot was somewhat easier. There were trains, and roads, and some airplanes. Schultes's first approach to the Amazon River began with a two-day-and-two-night trek by bus to Pasto, near the Ecuadoran border, and then, by truck, he proceeded east to Sibundoy, the base of the Kamsa Indians. There was a Capuchin mission at Sibundoy, and priests put him up, as many other missionaries would do in later years. The priests also introduced him to two Indian medicine men, and these shamans acted as guides on his subsequent forays. Most of his early excursions into unsettled areas began in similar fashion—either at a mission (he generally got on much better with Catholics than with Protestants, some of whom were so intensely holier than thou that he can rarely allude to them without a prefatory "damned") or at a military outpost. He was always hospitably received; for the occupants of a mission or an outpost, the arrival of an educated white man was a real



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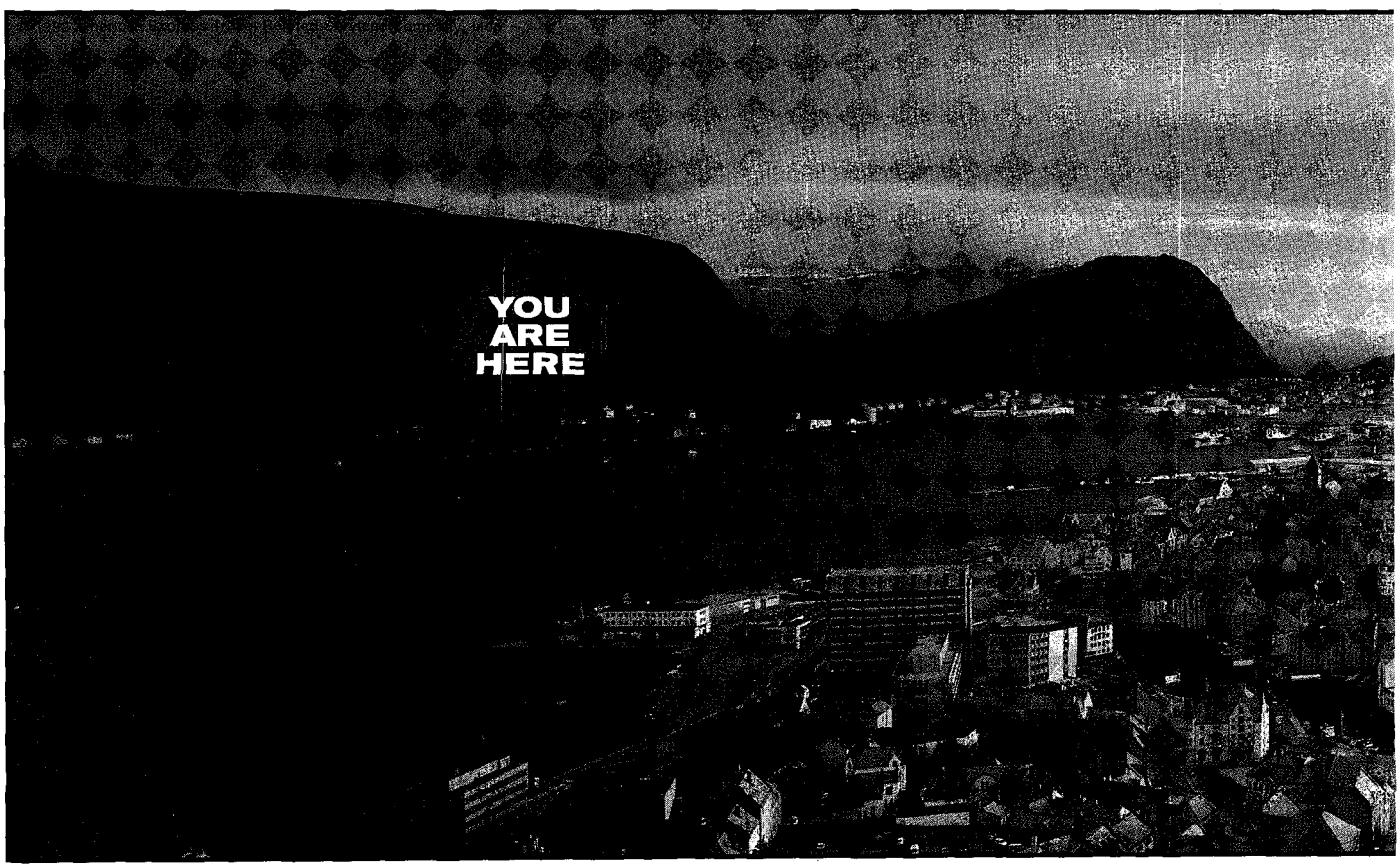
treat. One army officer who hadn't had any such company for a long time, learning that his unexpected guest knew how to play chess, kept him all but imprisoned for several weeks.

Although other botanists had long been aware of the muscle-relaxing properties of curare, when Schultes and his various guides set forth on its trail he knew not much more about it than that animals pierced with arrows whose tips had been daubed with it soon collapsed. "He to whom it comes, falls" was an Amazonian description of it. Schultes soon found out that there was quite an assortment of curares, of varying potencies and uses—this one to bring down birds, that one for monkeys, another for tapirs. The Indians who hunted with curare introduced him to more than three dozen kinds, which he segregated and labelled, for the convenience of chemists in Bogotá and Cambridge who would analyze them. His researches were the first steps toward identifying the more than seventy species of plants that can be used to make curare. Schultes would later assert, "How fortunate for modern medicine that scientific inquisitiveness led modern investigators to look at the curares—plant preparations employed by South American Indians to kill, yet the source of alkaloids capable, in the hands of surgeons, of safeguarding life when used as muscle relaxants?"

In late December, when news of Pearl Harbor caught up with him at a remote Indian settlement, Schultes—being of draft age, single, and robust enough to be leading an unarguably demanding life—packed up his curare samples and his notes and set out on a ten-day journey, by canoe and foot and bus, to Bogotá and its American Embassy, to make himself available for military service. His government had other plans for him. The rubber plantations in Southeast Asia had been cut off by the advancing Japanese, and the synthetic rubber available to the Allies had its merits but wasn't good enough to replace the genuine article in, for instance, the production of tires for airplanes. The procurement of real rubber had a high wartime priority.

When Richard Spruce was on the Amazonian scene, in the eighteen-fifties and sixties, the area had been seized by rubber fever. The river-port city of Manaus became so prosperous that it boasted an opera house. The Indians who extracted latex from the trees around them could barely keep up with the demand. The advice of the Englishman, who discovered several previously unrecognized rubber plants (*Hevea spruceana* among them), had been much sought and much appreciated. But the boom didn't last. Amazonian rubber couldn't compete in the global marketplace with that of Southeast Asia. The trees there grew on well-tended plantations, in neat rows; a single worker could tap a hundred of them—a process sometimes known as milking—in a day. South American trees were scattered every which way. It took time and effort for workers to get to them. Moreover, by 1942, thirty years had passed since Amazonian production tailed off, so most living Indians had never, as the phrase went, "cut rubber." Before the wartime generation could start to do so, outlanders like Schultes had to help teach them a knack their ancestors had been all but born with. Having a full-fledged botanist on hand—and, moreover, one



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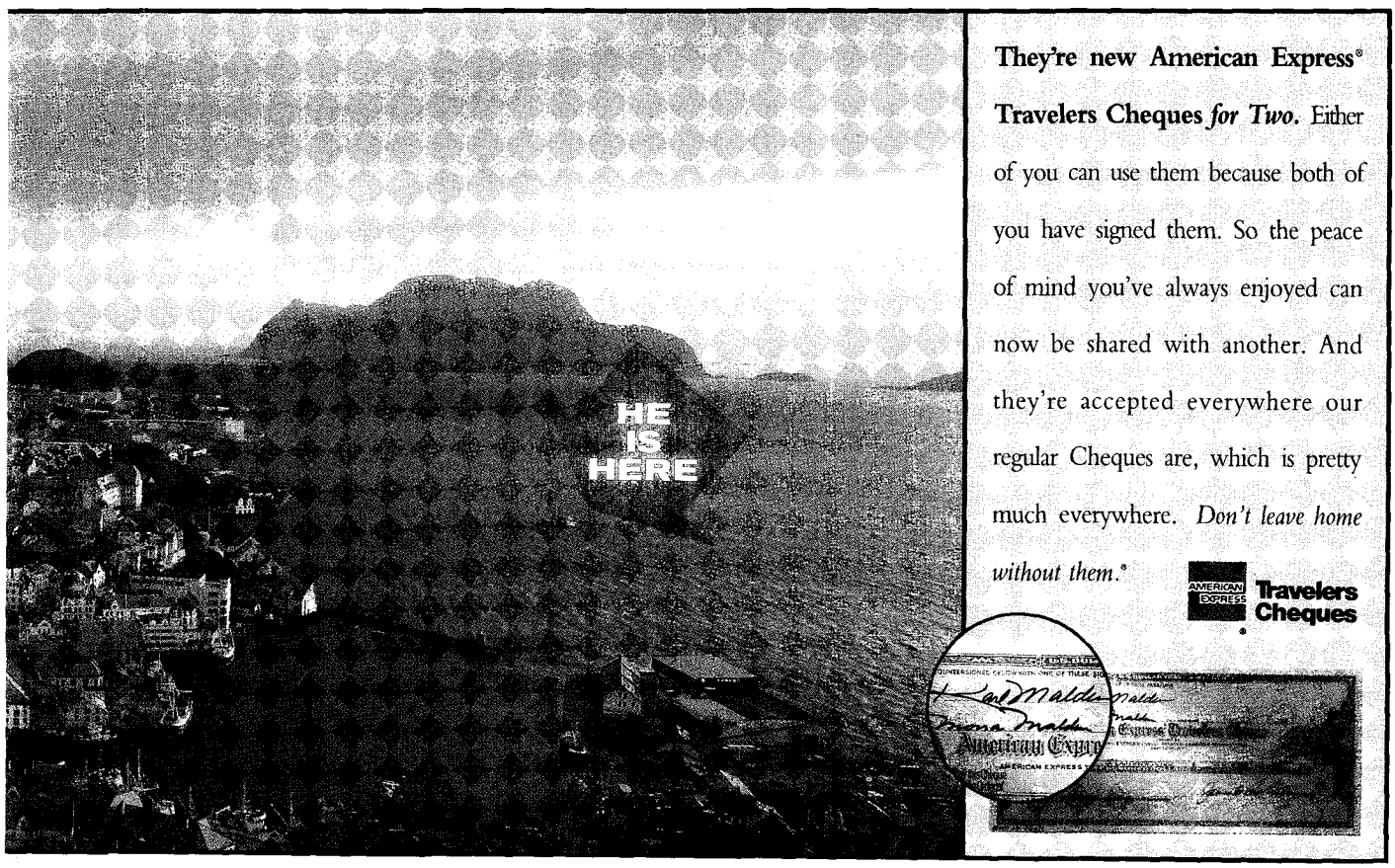
whose trained eye few rubber trees of old or new species could hope to elude—seemed providential to the war-production crowd up in Washington. Accordingly, Selective Service was asked to yield him to other branches of the federal government—first to something called the Rubber Development Corporation, and then to the Division of Rubber Plant Investigation of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering of the Agricultural Research Administration of the Department of Agriculture. He stayed on the federal payroll, as a plant explorer, for a decade.

Schultes's first assignment was to count the adult rubber trees along the banks of a thirteen-hundred-mile stretch of the Apaporis River, which, in his nostalgic recollection, was "a wonderful river for botanizing." He simplified the task by deciding to count the trees on one side of the river and multiply by two. With several Indian companions, he set forth. The journey took seven months. At one point, Schultes's superiors back in Bogotá, concerned at not having heard from him for many weeks, sent a military plane to look for him. He couldn't be seen and was presumed lost, but, luckily, nobody got around to notifying his family.

By the time Schultes was furloughed from Agriculture, he had collected thirty-five hundred specimens of *Hevea*, the genus whose member trees provide all of the globe's natural rubber, and had measured the latex yield of the trees the specimens came from. And, by the awed reckoning of his colleagues, he had superintended the gathering of three tons of *Hevea* seeds suitable for cultivation. He had become well acquainted with all of the nine known species of *Hevea* and had collected material from seven. He had, furthermore, discovered a whole new variety, the members of which seldom exceeded ten feet in height and were thus less likely than their taller brethren to be toppled by monsoons. Before long, Schultes had become universally recognized as a rubber expert, whose views commanded respect when, for instance, he wrote of *Hevea*, in terms few rubber-cutters anywhere were likely to comprehend, that "the biological significance of many of the morphological infraspecific variations to the evolutionary development of this pliable genus must be obvious."

Soon after the end of the war, Schultes began travelling to various Asian rubber-producing countries, and, throughout the nineteen-eighties, he was still making annual visits to Malaysia. In 1990, the chairman of the Malaysian Rubber Research and Development Board acclaimed his expertise as "second to none." Nowadays, when other botanists come across varieties of rubber that defy easy recognition or classification they frequently turn to Schultes for enlightenment. Among a number of books he still plans to write is one to be titled "*Hevea:* Rubber Trees in the Wild." He has an entire filing cabinet of notes to milk for it.

RICHARD SPRUCE travelled light. When Schultes left Bogotá for more rural surroundings, he followed suit. It had become clear to him after only a few forays that heavy boots were an unnecessary precaution against snakebite—the snakes one ran into were arboreal, and so were more inclined to strike at necks than at feet. In due course, he reduced his basic impedi-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menta to one change of clothing, a pith helmet, a hammock, a thin blanket, camera and film (black-and-white only), notebooks and pencils, a medical kit, formaldehyde and newspapers for plant preservation, and, for gathering specimens, a machete and clippers. He carried no firearms. Just once, he was persuaded to borrow a pistol for a couple of days, and that was while he was visiting an agronomic experimental station that was also the site of a penal colony comprising some of Colombia's most feared criminals. They weren't kept locked up, for two good reasons: they had to grow their own food, and they were surrounded by a near-impenetrable jungle. "Against the Indians one needed nothing," Schultes would say when he was asked if he ever felt endangered. On one occasion, when a less intrepid acquaintance attempted to warn him about a reputedly hostile tribe beyond the next mountain range, Schultes replied, "I do not believe in hostile Indians." He has described the assorted Indian chiefs he has known as "gentlemen." "All that is required to bring out their gentlemanliness is reciprocal gentlemanliness," he says.

Having arrived in an area he proposed exploring, Schultes travelled largely by water. His favorite craft was an aluminum canoe, eighteen feet long and weighing only fifty-three pounds; it could be handily portaged around rapids and other obstacles, yet could carry three men and a ton of cargo. He spurned larger, motorized, and more comfortable vessels even on the rivers they could navigate. They were not easy to bring to a quick halt, and he suffered from the impatience of, as he once put it, "every naturalist who has travelled in a vehicle which he himself does not command."

When it came to trafficking or bartering with Indians, he learned early not to bother with money or beads or other garden-variety trinkets. His Indians had no desire or use for them but were pleased to be proffered knives or scissors or cloth. "If I needed four or five men to go off on a canoe trip with me for four or five days and they seemed reluctant, I'd take some bright-colored cloth out of my pack and put it back in, but not before some wives had spotted it," Schultes says. "They made life miserable for their husbands until they agreed to accompany me." And then there were aluminum pots, with nested sets the undisputed favorites. Once, after he had come to understand the language of the Yakunas, he heard one woman say to another, as she was tapping the side of his canoe, "What a wonderful pot this would make!"

Whenever he was en route to an Indian settlement he had not previously visited, it didn't occur to him, he says, that his presence, however unanticipated, might be unwelcome. (Anyway, he was seldom a surprise; more often than not, word of his imminence was spread by jungle telegraph.) On reaching a new landing place, he wouldn't get out of his canoe until the oldest man around emerged from the communal residence—generally a large thatched hut where everybody slept—and offered to share some coca powder, a formality that was tantamount to a handshake. Then Schultes and any travelling companions would unload their gear, proceed to the hut, and be shown where to sling their hammocks. The rafters from which these hung sometimes housed boa constrictors—ideal pets for coping with rats. The itinerant American was careful not to have more than friendly relations with any Indian women. "It never crossed my mind to have any contact with any of them after the son of a medicine man mentioned casually to me that he'd once killed a white man for bothering his sister," Schultes recalled recently, adding, "I happened to know the fellow he killed. He was a bastard."

While Schultes was always on the lookout for new medications or new therapies, he never contemplated relying entirely on shamans to attend to whatever might be ailing him. Nevertheless, his medical kit was modest. There was morphine, to enable him, if he suffered a broken bone, to endure being litter-borne to the nearest practitioner who could cope with it (that never happened), and there were vitamin pills and antibiotics—that was about it. He frequently came down with malaria, beriberi, and other illnesses. In one of his field journals he recounted that, one day—when a month and a half's worth of plant specimens had spoiled—he was running a very high fever, had rheumatic pains in every joint, and was violently nauseated. Yet what should he spot, crashing into the cabin of his boat—for once, he wasn't travelling by canoe—but a *Micrandra* minor! It was a member of the rubber family, and all the more bracing a sight because it was kin to *Micrandra spruceana*, the latex of which, Richard Spruce had earlier observed, was relied on by the Witotos to stem the flow of blood after the separation of the umbilical cord. Schultes felt better right away.

There were endless wasp stings and mosquito bites, though none of the

SHIRTS

"Is there anything cleaner than a clean white shirt?"
—*Octavio Paz.*

There was no poetry waiting for my mother
in the week's worth of shirts.
Her arm would have to travel a long way,
steering the small boat of the iron
on a slow, repetitive journey up
and down the backs of my father's shirts,
the narrow channels of his sleeves,
while "As the World Turns" was on the TV.
She never asked for help, though I wanted
to give it; instead she ordered me
outside to play, saying I'd have to
do this work soon enough someday—
she didn't want a mother's little helper.
I'm grateful to her for that, and for
other freedoms she was never granted, like
sleeping with a man who is not your husband.
This morning, I watch from bed as you iron
your white shirt, pleased that such
an important thing as women's work
does not come between us.

—Marianne Burke

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latter were comparable to those suffered by Spruce. "I constantly returned from my walks with my hands, feet, neck and face covered with blood," the British botanist wrote. "Many times, there is no sitting down to eat a meal, but one must walk about, platter in hand, and be content to eat one's food well peppered with mosquitoes."

To thwart the bushmaster and the fer-de-lance, Schultes was always glad also to have along some ampules of snakebite remedy made by a Brazilian laboratory, though he never had to resort to it. He was often faced with troubling decisions—whether to offer an antibiotic, say, to an Indian with an ulcerated wound. Though he might sometimes be called "white witch doctor," he wouldn't try to compete with a tribe's own pharmacist. "If you were to give an aspirin to a sick old man and he died the next day, you'd suffer the consequences," Schultes says.

Only once did he yield to compassion. On inquiring why some Indian women were crying, he was taken to the hammock of a teen-age girl whose leg was turning blue: gangrene—she'd been bitten by a bushmaster. Schultes got out his precious ampules. He explained that his antidote had been concocted for white bodies, and he didn't know whether it would work for others. And he requested—this he felt was crucial—that the women summon their shaman. He duly arrived, and over the next couple of hours, while the American gave the victim three injections, the medicine man, exhaling puffs of a presumably curative smoke, chanted solemn incantations. Schultes had to go downriver the following morning. When he came back upstream a week later, the girl was skipping about. "I'm sure the medicine man took most of the credit," the white witch doctor said afterward. "I didn't give a damn. I was happy to be credited with giving him a hand."

Schultes normally took along as provisions only canned instant coffee and canned Boston baked beans. It was usually too hot in the tropics for coffee to be grown. As for the beans, in boyhood he had supped on them (with brown bread) every Saturday night. When everything seemed at its bleakest in the jungle—specimens lost or damaged, malaria peaking, Indians disinclined to give him a hand—and he was faced with a choice, as he looks back on it, between suicide and opening a can of beans, he would let suicide wait, and things would perk up at once.

Mostly, he ate whatever his Indian hosts ate. The staple food of the majority of them was a cereal made from tapioca. (He preferred that to standard urban Colombian fare. "In Bogotá, everybody seemed to eat steamed rice three times daily," he says. "After a spell of that, I could hardly wait to get back to the jungle.") There were few vegetables but many fruits: along with bananas and oranges, there were pineapples in all sizes, and every one, he reflects, sweeter than anything ever exported from Hawaii. There was fish (his favorite was a swordfishlike breed called tambaqui) and game—monkeys, mainly, but also tapir, deer, and large rodents called capybara. And when there wasn't enough food of any kind to go around, there was always coca.

During his jungle years, Schultes and coca were inseparable companions. Indulging in it, he had perceived from the beginning, was a significant part of regional life. With his habitual precision, he has described the experience:

> A spoonful or two is put in the mouth. Conversation is impossible, until the powder has slowly been moistened and packed with the tongue between the gums and the cheeks. It is not chewed but is allowed gradually to mix with saliva and pass into the stomach. When the amount of the powder is thus diminished, it is replenished with an additional supply. Normally, a supply is kept in the mouth throughout the day. . . . Coca powder has an initial bitter taste which puckers up the mouth. The first noticeable effect is a slight anaesthetizing of the tongue and mouth; this is followed by a general stimulation. . . . The stimulation and capacity for performance and endurance which coca affords the individual and its ability to suppress hunger pangs gives the drug the role of an indispensable *vademecum* in the more or less itinerant life of deprivation which many Indians of the northwest Amazon must undergo.

Once resettled in Massachusetts—except for periodic returns to the Amazon—Schultes managed to wean himself from coca more quickly and easily than many of his contemporaries could give up cigarettes. "Until we stop the use of tobacco," Schultes said recently, "leave the Indian alone with his coca leaves."

ALL along, Schultes kept in touch with Harvard. In 1945, Oakes Ames was succeeded as director of the Botanical Museum—and teacher of Biology 104—by the corn breeder and scholar Paul Mangelsdorf; he kept

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Schultes on the institutional roster as an uncompensated research associate. Whenever Schultes took a leave from *Hevea* territory and headed north, he stopped by the old building to let it be known that he still existed. During one trip home, in 1942, he went to his sister's wedding. Some of the music was furnished by a young soprano named Dorothy Crawford McNeil, a Boston University M.A. in economics who was also a professional singer.

Richard and Dorothy took to each other, though to acquaintances of both they seemed an egregious mismatch. She knew nothing of science; he was a musical ignoramus. Politically, she was liberal; he was—and is—a conservative of the first order. (He has so low an opinion of the Democratic Party and its standard-bearers that he cannot bring himself to refer to Kennedy Airport except as "Idlewild," and in one Presidential election, his sensitive stomach having been turned by the names of all the slated candidates, he wrote in that of Queen Elizabeth.)

Dorothy and Richard did not become formally engaged before he had to head back south. It was more or less understood, though, that they would get together again whenever he returned permanently to New England's version of civilization. During the twelve years before that happened, he spent most of his time in the jungle, and she, between singing engagements in the Aleutians (with the U.S.O.), in Italy and Austria, at the Edinburgh Festival, and, most frequently, with the New York City Opera, helped make ends meet as a vocalist with Phil Spitalny's all-girl band.

THE longer Schultes dwelt in what is now popularly known as the rain forest (environmental fund-raisers find the word "jungle" unappealing), the easier it became for him to reach the Indians he wanted to associate with. As a newcomer to Bogotá, he had fallen in with a number of Army officers. Most were cavalrymen, and Schultes had often gone horseback riding with them, for exercise and fun. A decade later, some of those officers had attained a rank at which they could arrange for military hydroplanes to transport him and his canoe and his provisions far along an inland river, saving him many days of paddling and portaging. It does not make him happy to be reminded that while he was thus handsomely treated other Colombians are responsible for the growth and distribution of so many of the plant-spawned scourges now infiltrating the United States. When he is pressed nowadays to comment on Colombia and the drug scene, he confines himself to some such utterance as "I love Colombia, and it's terrible what they've been going through."

Schultes prefers to think about that country's attempts to protect its rural population and their traditional landholdings. He gives the Colombian government high marks for having set aside a fifteen-million-acre enclave in the southwest, in 1986, for the use of eighty thousand Indians, chiefly Witotos—and decreeing, among other restrictions, that it was thenceforth to have no roads for motor vehicles, no hydroelectric plants, and no missionaries. (About this last restriction Schultes has mixed feelings. While he was grateful to the missionaries who helped him out when he was a jungle novice, he came to deplore the efforts of those who seemed to be always wanting to put clothes on people who could get along perfectly well without them.) It is within this vast tract that the two million acres designated Sector Schultes lie—an expanse nearly six hundred thousand acres grander than a sector honoring Simón Bolívar.

Colombia has reciprocated Schultes's affection in other ways as well. In 1953, the Universidad Nacional, in Bogotá, made him an honorary professor and gave him an honorary degree. In 1956, he became a member of the Academia Colombiana de Ciencias. In 1969, the government admitted him to the exclusive Order of Victoria Regia. In 1983, the then President, Belisario Betancur Cuartas, conferred on him the country's highest decoration, the Order of the Cross of Boyaca.

Schultes had by then survived an embarrassing encounter with a previous President, Eduardo Santos. In 1941, both attended the opening of a new home of the Institute of Natural Sciences, at the invitation of its director, Armando Dugand. Schultes didn't know that Santos was not only President but also the owner of *El Tiempo*, a major daily paper. On their being introduced, the President, who spoke excellent English, said, "Tell me, Dr. Schultes, what do you think of the Colombian press?"

"Stupid Dick Schultes told him the truth," Schultes says. "I said, 'I have too much scientific reading to do to bother with newspapers anywhere, but I do know about Colombian ones. I buy them by the bushel.' His Excellency looked puzzled, and wondered why. 'To press plants,' I said, 'and on rainy days, if I can't go out after specimens and am bored, sometimes I read them.' Dugand was listening, and frowning. The President wanted to know which papers I took. I explained that *El Tiempo*—the others were mostly tabloids—was the best size for pressing. '*That's* why you take it?' he asked. 'It's important to me, you know.' By now, Armando was trying to wave me off. But I plunged on, delighted to have the Presidential ear. 'Also, Excellency, they're the most absorbent,' I said. 'Ah,' he said. 'The most absorbent. I must share this intelligence with my editors.' "

Richard Spruce, like many a botanist before and after him, dried his plant specimens in the field. Here Schultes often departed from precedent. Dried plants tend to turn crisp and brittle. To keep his specimens more malleable until they could be further studied, Schultes would dilute his supply of formaldehyde, one part to three parts water, soak his plants in the mixture, and then sandwich them between sheets of *El Tiempo*. Next, he would bundle up his damp cache, stow it in rubber or plastic bags, and hope that a hydroplane or other accommodating carrier would turn up before too long and deliver them to the Institute of Natural Sciences. If no carrier came by for six weeks or so, Schultes would open up his bundles and pour in some more of the formaldehyde solution.

On a good day, out in the forest, Schultes would collect twenty or thirty specimens that he thought merited further attention. Along a riverbank, where foraging was easier, he sometimes bagged eighty or ninety. Inept at mathematics he might be, but he relished certain precise calculations: that in one nineteen-hundred-square-foot expanse of Amazonia, for instance, he had totted up sixteen hundred specimens, or that in a nearby area there

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were at least forty-six varieties of tree, each of which had a trunk at least four inches in diameter. Finding a totally unfamiliar plant was what could make his day. His associates in the field maintained that his taxonomic eye could spot a novel flower or frond while he was barrelling along a road at forty miles an hour. Once, Schultes and a close friend and colleague, the Swedish toxicologist Bo Holmstedt, of Stockholm's Karolinska Institute, were passengers in a chartered Piper Cub that nearly ran into some trees while taking off. Holmstedt recalled that while he was holding his breath Schultes seemed not only unperturbed but elated; as they bumped along, he had glimpsed a new species of the genus *Cecropia*.

Once the plants had been collected, they had to be written up. A not atypical Schultesian field note went, in toto, "26075. *Spathiphyllum*. Common in floodable swales in sunny places. Witoto = djë gai´-rë. Inside of spathe white. Fragrant at night. Root (which is rather woody & hard to dig out) and leaves & nifl. [flowering stalk] are burned to ashes for making 'salt' for the Virola pellets."

He made all his notes in pencil. "A lead pencil is wonderful," he says. "To begin with, you can erase, and if you want to stop and think you can chew on it. Chewing on a pencil has always helped me think." Every so often, though, his mastication would inspire gloomy thoughts. The reporter Margaret B. Kreig has passed along, in her estimable 1964 book "Green Medicine," an excerpt from a journal of "the foremost authority in his field" written while Schultes—suffering from malaria—was one of fourteen passengers on a decrepit barge limping along a tributary of the Amazon:

> I am discouraged because the formaldehyde I bought is very inferior and nearly all of my collections for the past month and a half are rotten. . . . This afternoon I came down with a very high fever. Have rheumatic pains in every limb and back. . . . Vomiting continuously, very weak, probably mostly from malnutrition—we have had no warm food, only a tin of sardines for supper last night.

It sounded like baked-beans time.

Schultes usually did his writing after dark, by torchlight, or when it was raining. For a chair, he used a wooden stool that he carried around; for a desk, either his lap or a metal chest in which he stored film and anything else that had to stay dry. He was a tireless

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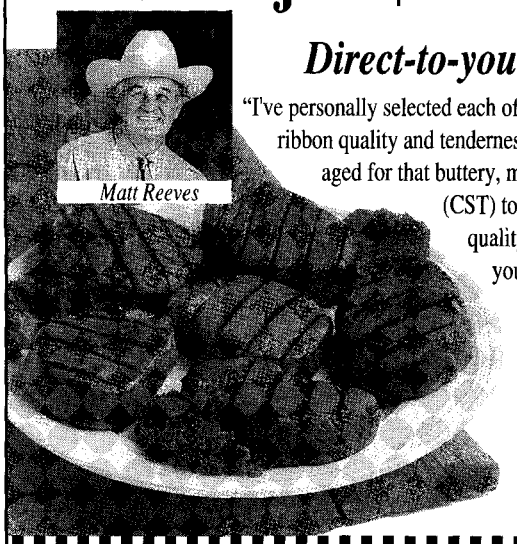

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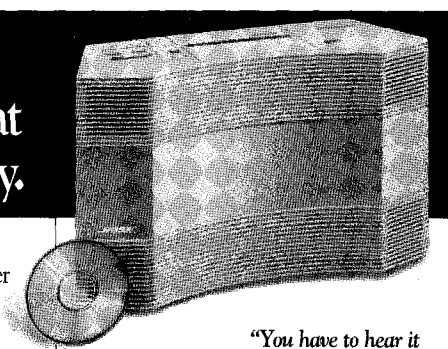

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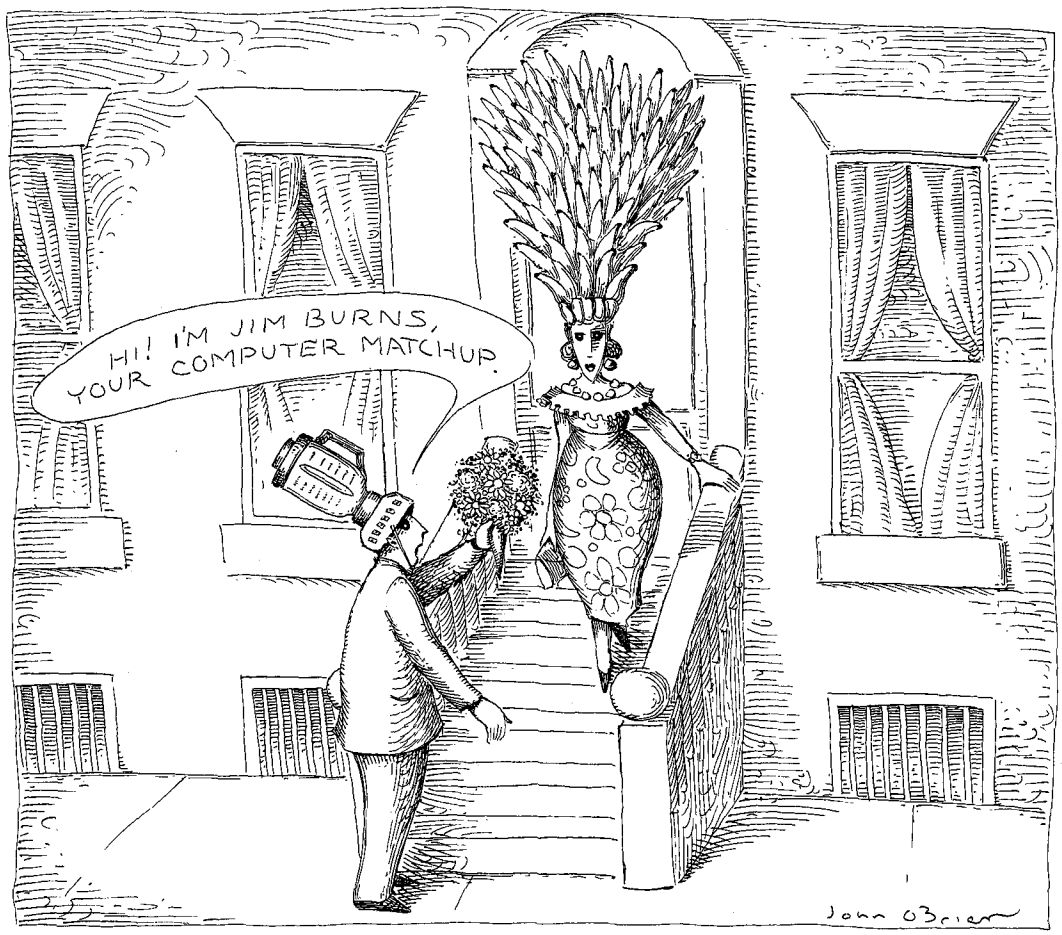

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photographer, and he trained one of his Indian helpers to take pictures of *him*. An exhibit of his photographs at Harvard in 1990 included one picture of a smiling bunch of scantily dressed Waikas with a near-naked and grinning Schultes alongside them. Another shot showed three men engaged in a Yukana tribal dance, all of them, to judge by their expressions, thoroughly stoned. Schultes would sometimes use that one in class to illustrate a point, and, after having it projected for no more than an instant, would say, "The one on the left has a Harvard degree."

During protracted rainy spells in the jungle, Schultes found many uses for his pencils. On and off, over a twelve-year stretch, he worked at translating the diary of an eighteenth-century Spanish botanist, Hipolito Ruiz, who spent close to a year in Chile and Peru. Schultes, having been convinced by a friend in the Colombian diplomatic service that the journal, a two-volume work, warranted publication in English, took it with him wherever he went, along with a Spanish-English dictionary. His years in the jungle have taught him never to be in a hurry. He began his translation in 1952, and it will finally be published next year.

Schultes had more time for writing than reading because, like Spruce before him, he often went for weeks or months without mail. As he had told the proprietor of *El Tiempo*, he grew accustomed to a life style uncluttered by up-to-date newspapers. When he eventually resettled in Massachusetts, in 1954, he saw no reason to change that routine. To this day, he displays little interest in current events—except, perhaps, for a convergence of Commonwealth-nation Prime Ministers or a Harvard-Yale game. When the "Today" show was planning a segment on narcotics and thought a few learned observations on hallucinogens by him might fit in nicely, the functionary who phoned him was taken aback to hear him say, "The what show?" Schultes had never heard of it.

IN 1954, Schultes finally landed a full-time Harvard job—as the curator of Oakes Ames's fifty-thousand-strong orchidarium. Dorothy McNeil was still waiting. Nevertheless, Schultes continued to devote vacation months to the jungle, and he was loath to ask her to spend so much wedded time alone. Eventually, on March 26, 1959, they were married, at King's Chapel, the Unitarian church where Schultes's father and paternal grandfather had worshipped before him.

In less than two years, the couple had three children: first a boy, and then twins—a girl and a boy. That two of the children were boys would have confounded some Indians living near certain carved rocks at La Pedrera, on Colombia's Río Caquetá. For were not the inscriptions thereon thought to be fertility symbols, and had not every native man around cautioned that, as Schultes recorded the warning, "so powerful are these engravings still that he who looks upon them will produce only female offspring, nevermore begetting a male child"? And had not the botanist, then still without progeny, dared not merely to gaze at the stones but also to photograph them?

The elder son, Richard Evans Schultes II—he is known as Evans—worked his way through an industrial-management course at the University of Lowell by loading United Parcel Service trucks four nights a week, and he found the company so congenial that he has been with it ever since. The twins were both named for their maternal grandfather, Alexander McNeil. The boy, Neil, became another Harvard ibid, but in molecular biology. His father pretends to be unable to comprehend much of what he does. It is Neil who is now at Yale. His twin, Alexandra Ames, went to Wellesley and then to the Medical School of the University of Massachusetts. She married a fellow-doctor, and practices in Holden, Massachusetts.

The senior Schulteses didn't wish to live in Cambridge or in Boston. "I didn't want my children to be educated in any place run by Democrats, where school-board meetings regularly ended in fistfights," Schultes says today. So in 1959, even before they became parents,

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the couple shopped around Republican-leaning towns and settled on Melrose, a community of some twenty thousand, a few miles north of Harvard. Melrose seemed ideal: no shopping mall, an Old Guard mayor with twenty unruffled years in office, a weekly newspaper that, according to Schultes, who occasionally glances at it, "will tell you Mrs. Jones is recovering from a hangnail," and an annual September celebration called a Victorian Day. Richard Spruce might have felt at home.

The Schulteses bought a thirteen-room house on a broad, tree-lined street. The previous owner had converted a spacious basement into a party room. Schultes converted it again—into a study and library, with space for several filing cabinets and four thousand ethnobotanical books. The wall of the stairwell leading to this retreat is covered with souvenirs of his career: documents attesting to his being a life member of the American Society of Pharmacognosy and a fellow of the Third World Academy of Sciences, of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology, and of the National Academy of Sciences of India; and citations for assorted honors—among the more recent being the 1987 John and Alice Tyler Ecology-Energy Prize (a seventy-five-thousand-dollar one) for ethnopharmacological conservation, and the 1991 Charles A. Lindbergh Fund award as "the world's authority on hallucinogenic, narcotic, and medicinal plants . . . a living link to the great natural historians of the 19th century [read 'Spruce'] and to a distant era, when the rainforests stood immense, inviolable, a green mantle stretching across an entire continent."

Then there are, among yet more encomiums, a Doctor of Science degree from the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy ("I can't even read a prescription," the recipient says) and testimonial scrolls from the Botanical Society of Cuba and the World Wildlife Fund. The latter is signed by Prince Philip. It abuts a commendation from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, signed by Governor Michael Dukakis. It irritates Schultes almost every time he negotiates the stairs that the Democrat's signature is larger than the Consort's. When Dorothy Schultes, who was born in Scotland, heard that a medal His Royal Highness once gave her husband included a couple of ounces of gold, she popped it into a Melrose bank vault. She let Schultes keep, and wear, his Lindbergh trophy—a wristwatch designed by the Lone Eagle after his most celebrated flight. Looking at it recently in his Botanical Museum office at 9:37 A.M., Schultes said, "I could tell you what time it is in the other Cambridge right now if I could figure out how to run this thing."

At the very head of the cellar stairs perches a 1988 Golden Plate Award (actually, the plate is ceramic) from the American Academy of Achievement, a nonprofit organization that holds an annual "Salute to Excellence." Before leaving to accept that one, Schultes was informed that his fellow-honorees would include Minnie Pearl, Johnny Cash, Brent Scowcroft, and General Colin Powell. He asked his wife who in the world they were. "Don't worry, dear," Dorothy replied. "They've never heard of you, either."

After Schultes stopped devoting his summers to South America, the family began to spend extended vacations at Sutton Island, a tiny Maine retreat two miles off Northeast Harbor. Among its fewer than two dozen rustic residences were two belonging to Harvard, which the university rented to professors. Something that may have made the island especially attractive to Schultes was the challenging inconvenience—no roads, so that to reach the Schulteses' house the groceries and everything else had to be lugged by wheelbarrow for fifteen minutes up a steep, narrow trail paved with spruce roots and granite boulders.

HARVARD in the nineteen-sixties was, like much of the rest of the academic scene, preoccupied with Vietnam and with drugs. Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert, both nontenured faculty members in clinical psychology, were big men on campus. In Harvard Square, peddlers were hawking sugar impregnated with LSD—a dollar a cube. (Albert Hofmann had not anticipated that his discovery would become recreational.) By now, Schultes had wearied of trying anything like that again. In the jungle, when he turned to narcotics—the day-in-and-day-out reliance on coca excepted—he had customarily done so under the strict control of a medicine man or other recognized authority. Whatever proceedings Schultes took part in, he

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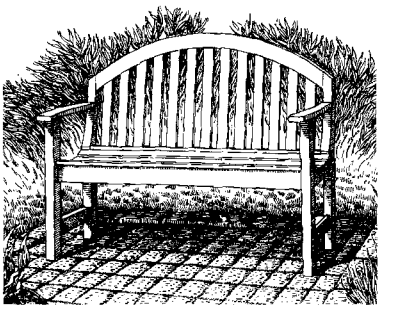

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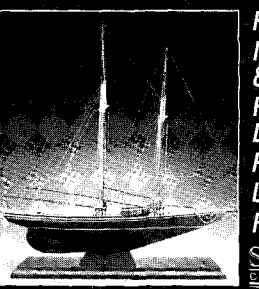

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says, were most often religious or therapeutic. "I never got scared," he says. "I did get color reactions, like colored clouds or mists going by, but, probably because I took limited dosages, I never saw visions." And, besides, there was sound scholarly justification for that kind of highly personal research: hallucinogens, he has written, constitute "one of the fundamental elements of human culture." His pronounced interest in those elements did result, on occasion, in his being seen as contributing to the undermining of youth. The bookstall at one botanical garden refused to stock his "Plants of the Gods" (written with Hofmann), despite the authors' having said in the preface, "This book is not intended as a guide to the use of hallucinogenic plants. Its purpose is to offer scientific, historical, and cultural documentation concerning a group of plants, which are or have been of importance in many societies."

Schultes likes to point out that very few of the exotic drugs he has touched on are grown in the United States, and that very few young Americans go to the Amazon. He has not yet figured out a way for the government to strike a sensible balance between supply and demand. "I'm not sure that legalization of any drugs is the answer," he says. "We live in a mechanized society. South American Indians don't drive automobiles. Their drugs alter space and time perspectives, which you need while driving. Some of my associates argue for the legalization of cocaine and marijuana, with heavy taxes on them. I don't go along with that. Rather, I would advocate removing bars and lounges from the vicinity of highways. That might help put alcohol in its place."

In the early nineteen-sixties, Leary and Alpert were studying psychotropic drugs at Harvard's Center for Personality Research. They had tested the hallucinogen psilocybin on prison inmates but evidently couldn't obtain satisfactory results from that exclusive group. So they had turned to others, including students. One doctor then on the university staff recalls, "In 1962 or 1963, at the Harvard Health Services, we were confronted by new and bewildering phenomena: marijuana, LSD, peyote. We were supposed to be experts. I had to interview Leary and Alpert about the safety of their using drugs in their classes. A promise I extracted from them not to use drugs on undergraduates was the only leverage the college had in the end to fire them. Instant 'experts' were popping up everywhere: psychiatrists, pharmacists, moralists, and bureaucrats. One day, I had a flash of inspiration, and I went up to the museum and talked with Dick Schultes. No one had asked him anything. He knew more about these substances—and many others—than anyone else around. But he avoided the fray. His balanced view of marijuana amazed me in that era of hysteria on the part of the grownups and nonchalance on the part of the youth."

There was action on diverse fronts. Some of what Leary and Alpert were up to became widely known after the campus daily, the *Crimson*, sneaked a reporter into a meeting at the Center. (He was working with a Schultes student, who understood what the reporter had heard.) The *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* ran an illustrated two-page "Hallucinogenic Herbal" dealing with peyote, coca, morning glory, caapi, and teonanacatl. The magazine had done much of its research at the museum up on Oxford Street, and readers who wanted to know more were urged to consult Schultes's published works.

Leary and Alpert, for their part, also visited the museum, and once met Schultes. Later, in a memoir (which repeated an obscure rumor that Schultes—who has vigorously denied it—was a brainwashing operative for the C.I.A.), Leary stated that the professor had been cordial enough, but distant. "We felt like natives whose drug habits he was observing," Leary wrote. Schultes, who may have considered that a sensible way to appraise his visitors but has never put his reaction in writing, says he found them unimpressive. They had committed what were in his view three unforgivable sins: they persisted in using the word "psychedelic," which he maintains is both biologically inaccurate and etymologically unsound (he belongs to the "psychodelic" school); they misled an emissary of Harvard's President Nathan Pusey when they said they wouldn't experiment on undergraduates; and they misspelled the Latin names of plants.

Leary tried to get even. In 1963, when Pusey dismissed him and Alpert, Leary described a Harvard educa-

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tion as "a dangerous narcotic and addictive drug."

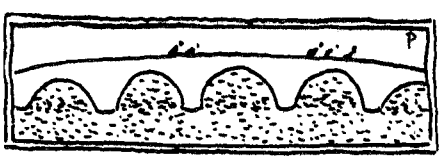
IN the United States, Schultes was well enough known by the early nineteen-seventies to be invited to many trials involving drugs. Although his credentials as an expert witness could scarcely be challenged, lawyers would nonetheless do their best to nonplus him. When a prosecutor in a Michigan courtroom suggested that Schultes embarked on such jurisprudential ventures to attain higher social standing, the professor retorted haughtily—and with perhaps forgivable exaggeration, under the circumstances—"Do you think a fifth-generation Bostonian would come out here to get into the Pontiac *Social Register*?"

One of the more diverting trials he testified in took place in British Columbia. The engine of a small freighter out of South America and bound for Alaska had failed twelve miles off Vancouver. A storm came up, and the captain radioed the Canadian Coast Guard for help. On coming to the rescue, the Canadians found twenty tons of cannabis in the hold. The vessel was towed in, and all hands were arrested. The law under which the arrests were made specifically banned *Cannabis sativa*—one of three species of the plant. But the cargo was composed of *C. indica*, a species grown in the relatively dry desert area shared by Colombia and Venezuela. As soon as Schultes was asked by the defense to testify and was told the source of the cargo, he was sure that the contraband couldn't be *C. sativa*, which is partial to cool, wet areas. "Everybody knows this," he says. On being sworn in, he spent an entire morning explaining how the shipment couldn't be *sativa*, and had to be *indica* (why, it didn't even contain any of the wood fibre typical of *sativa*), and, to make things as easy as possible for the judge and jury to understand, he used hardly any Latin. For technical reasons, the case never went to the jury, but the experience confirmed Schultes's opinion that "lawyers and politicians shouldn't make laws like that without consulting technical people."

WHENEVER Schultes was at the Botanical Museum, he adopted a striking costume: suspenders ("braces" to him), crimson four-in-hand, and a starched, spotless, snow-white lab coat. When elderly visitors who came to admire the glass flowers learned that they would have to climb two flights of stairs to do so, they sometimes expressed relief that there was a doctor in the house.

The glass flowers, which since the unveiling of the first ones, in 1888, have attracted about a hundred thousand viewers a year, were made by a gifted father-and-son team in Dresden, Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka. Between 1887 and 1936, the Blaschkas turned out eight hundred and forty-seven life-size and astonishingly realistic replicas of seven hundred and eighty varieties of flowering plants, not to mention more than three thousand additional detailed likenesses of parts of plants, diseased plants, and the process of pollinization. Professor George Lincoln Goodale, the first director of the museum (and the first instructor of Biology 104), had seen some Blaschka glass sculptures of marine invertebrates at Harvard's zoological museum. On a trip to Germany in 1886, he persuaded the artists to include flora as well as fauna in their field of expertise. The first few fragile flowers that crossed the ocean were damaged by clumsy customs agents, but, even so, they were seen and admired by Elizabeth C. Ware, the widow of a member of the Harvard class of 1834. As a memorial to her husband, Mrs. Ware, along with her daughter Mary, proposed underwriting a whole glass garden.

Over the years, a few of the flowers in the museum have been cracked by sonic booms. Schultes would hear a boom during the night in his Melrose bed—the planes responsible came from an Air Force base at Bedford—and would dread going to work in the morning. After a while, the Air Force graciously reined in its pilots until they were over the Atlantic. When the flowers are transported anywhere, they are exposed to other hazards. In 1893, a group of them was dispatched to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago for the outside world to appreciate. And a few flowers (including, appropriately, a tea plant, *Camellia sinensis*) were part of a display of Harvardiana at a Tokyo department store in 1974. Schultes agreed to their departure only after the store provided two first-class plane tickets—one for a Mr. Box, who was a foam-padded receptacle specially constructed for the journey, and one for William A. Davis, who, as Keeper of Scientific Exhibits, tended the flowers for a decade. In 1976, when, for charitable purposes, twenty-five of the flowers were lent to Steuben Glass's Fifth Avenue store, Schultes chartered a plane from a company with a long record of gentle landings. There remained the problem of how best to ferry the cargo to and from airports. Keeper Davis did some research and ascertained that the springs on most ambulances did not absorb shocks as well as those on most hearses. Schultes accordingly hired hearses for the ground legs of the trip south, and they proved so successful that hearses took the flowers all the way home.



BY 1957, Schultes was giving Mangelsdorf a hand with Biology 104, and after Mangelsdorf stopped teaching, in 1961, to devote himself to corn-breeding, Schultes took over the course. In 1967, he became the director of the museum, and in 1970 he was finally made a professor. He held both posts until he retired, in 1985. During his incumbency, the course attained a certain campus renown. (When he gave it up, it went out of existence.) Throughout the years in which drugs were much on undergraduate minds, it had the fetching catalogue description "Plants and Human Affairs," and people who knew anything about the professor in charge knew that he'd been mixed up with a lot of peculiar plants, some of them stimulating in more than one sense. They also knew that he liked to bring one of his six-foot souvenir blowguns to class and give as realistic a demonstration of how to manipulate it as was possible in a cramped lecture room. He used missiles with undipped tips. (Schultes is modest about his prowess. "I am now somewhat out of shape," he said a few months ago, "but at my best I was never able to outshoot the natives. However ineptly handled, though, a blowgun is more effective than a shotgun. With the former, if you miss your monkey you can get in several more shots before he's aware of you. With a shotgun, the damn monkey is in New York before you can reload.")

Schultes was always hospitable to

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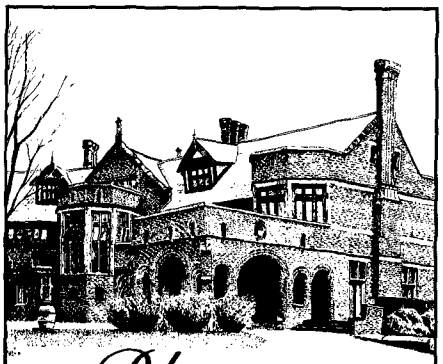

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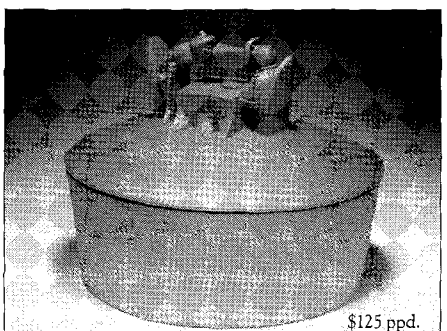

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those who sought out his pedagogy for any reason, but he soon discouraged run-of-the-mill curiosity-seekers by issuing them far more extensive reading assignments than they'd anticipated. He did not believe in coddling. When the federal government, to create longer weekends and leave midweeks intact, began observing various holidays on Monday, Schultes, who had a Monday-Wednesday-Friday class schedule, took it personally. He calculated that going along with the new order of things would deprive him of eleven lecture hours a year. His riposte was to set up Tuesday-evening replacements. These, to be sure, were voluntary, but he thought the students ought to know that examination questions just might pertain to information transmitted at one of the voluntary sessions.

Long after Schultes was a tenured professor of considerable seniority, he conducted a summer-school course one year even though only a handful of people had signed up for it. Long after his perks and privileges exempted him from such auxiliary chores, he taught night school. When someone asked why, he explained, "My first job is educating students, and night school is open to students who can't afford Harvard round the clock."

Schultes would read and reread and correct and annotate a single paper three or four times. He got and gets more mail—some from hippies who wonder if he can put them on to something really good—than he cares to acknowledge, or can. But recently, when a letter arrived from a stranger in Iowa saying that he'd seen a documentary film in which Schultes's blowgun prowess was featured, and that he hoped to go into ethnobotany, Schultes responded at length and by hand. "This was a case where it was my duty to help a student," he said later. "I'll never say no to a legitimate student—especially considering what students have to pay in tuition nowadays. My own professors gave me all the time in the world."

Among former students who have made his field theirs, Michael J. Balick is Philecology Curator and director of the Institute of Economic Botany at the New York Botanical Garden. "The professor had never met me when I came out of a Costa Rican rain forest in 1975 and called on him in Cambridge, but he treated me like a long-lost son," Balick says. Mark Plotkin is a vice-president of Conservation International, an environmental lobbying outfit in Washington. Siri von Reis, one of Schultes's few female disciples (her doctoral dissertation was about a hallucinogenic snuff used by South American Indians), is the co-editor, with Schultes, of an anthology of ethnobotanical essays. Enrique Forero, a Colombian who took botany under Schultes in Bogotá, is director of research at the Missouri Botanical Garden, in St. Louis. In 1982, out in the bush in western Colombia, Forero injured an eye. As soon as Schultes heard about it, he invited the young man to come to Massachusetts—"where we have the best eye doctors in the world"—and to stay at his home.

Dr. Andrew T. Weil practices natural medicine in Tucson, where he is on the faculty of the College of Medicine of the University of Arizona. "I'm the only physician who was a botany major and uses those studies in his work," he says. Before settling down professionally, he retraced some of Schultes's steps, as Schultes had retraced Spruce's, in the Colombian rain forest. "Being affiliated with Schultes opened doors everywhere," Weil says. "It was exciting to meet a number of elderly shamans who remembered his visits from their boyhood."

Some detached observers of the botanical landscape believe that specialists like Weil have limited horizons. Weil demurs. He recently collaborated, for instance, with Wade Davis, probably the most celebrated of the Schultes tribe, on a treatise entitled "The Identity of a New World Psychoactive Toad." In the best Schultesian tradition, when Weil and Davis carried on their research, on toads found in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona, early in 1991, they burned a chip made from the dried venom of a *Bufo alvarius*, inhaled the smoke, and, they reported, "experienced pronounced psychoactive effects"—in Davis's case, Schultes later read with admiration and respect, "a sense of the feel of the earth, the dry desert soil passing through my fingers, the stars at midday, the scent of cactus and sage, the feel of dry leaves through hands. . . . Warm waves coursed up and down my body." Davis added, "The effects lasted only a few minutes but a pleasant afterglow con-

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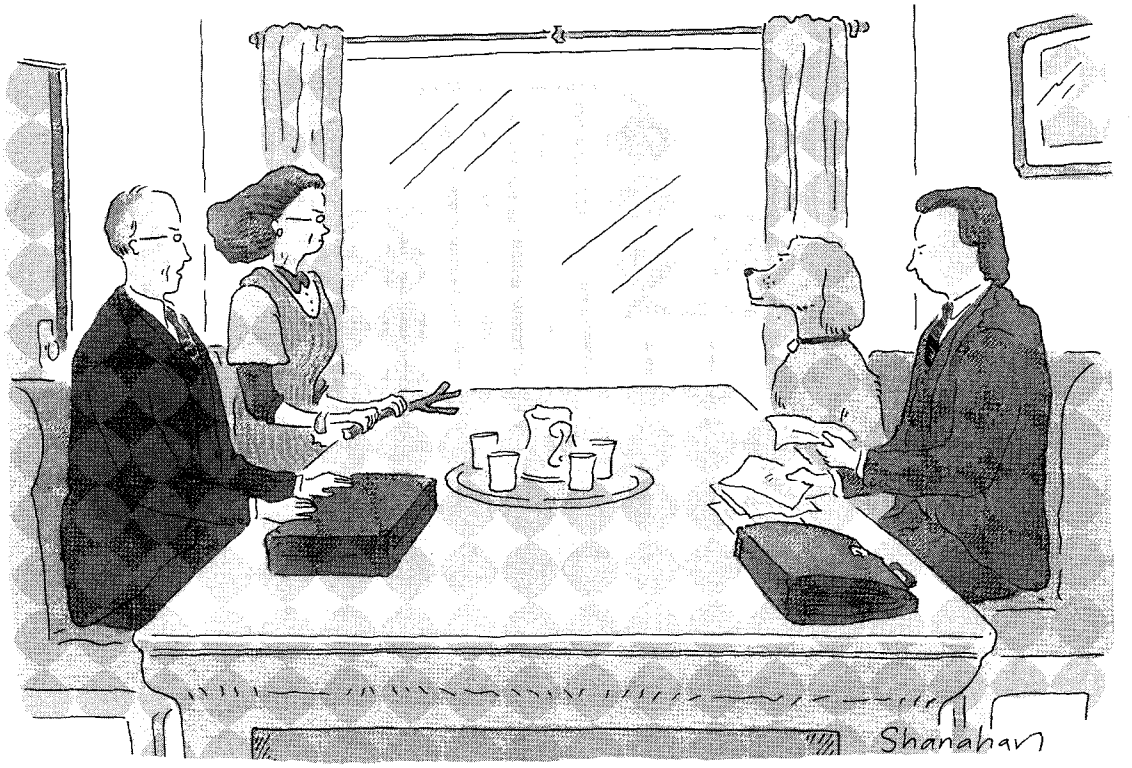

"Three yummies, a pat on the head, and a 'Good doggy.' That's my client's final offer."

• •

tinued for almost an hour." Weil was less down-to-earth yet more matter-of-fact: "Profound alteration of consciousness within a few seconds of exhaling. I relax into a deep, peaceful interior awareness. There is nothing scary about the effects and no sense of toxicity. I try to describe my feelings but am unable to talk for the first five minutes and then only with some difficulty. This is a powerful psychoactive drug, one that I think would appeal to most people who like the effects of hallucinogens." In their joint proud words, their adventure provided the first documentation—although its existence had long been surmised—"of an hallucinogenic agent from the animal kingdom."

Davis graduated from Harvard in 1977. Eight years later, he published "The Serpent and the Rainbow," a study of Haitian zombies which attracted wide attention and was the basis of a movie. (The book was dedicated to Davis's parents and to two non-relatives—John Lennon and Richard Schultes.) In 1974, Davis, an anthropology major, had had an urge to inspect the Amazon region. "There was only one man to see," he later wrote in "The Serpent and the Rainbow." "Professor Richard Evans Schultes was an almost mythic figure on the campus at that time, and like many other students both within and outside the Department of Anthropology I had a respect for him that bordered on veneration. The last of the great plant explorers in the Victorian tradition, he was for us a hero in a time of few heroes." Davis went up to the Botanical Museum to solicit Schultes's counsel. The professor was quick to approve what he had in mind. He offered some advice: take a pith helmet and try ayahuasca.

NEW roles for plants or their parts are being explored more and more frequently: the possibility that the isoflavone quotient of the soybean could combat breast cancer; the use of one species of skunk cabbage as a contraceptive; the use of the mayapple to treat venereal warts. In the nineteen-fifties, when Schultes and his fellow-botanists were out in the field prospecting for therapeutic greenery, some of the big pharmaceutical firms showed interest in their pursuits. On one visit back home, Schultes was invited by Robert Raffauf to join in an investigation of plants that seemed promising, on behalf of the company then called Smith Kline & French, where Raffauf had been installed, in 1951, as a natural-products field representative. Nearly a decade of on-and-off work followed without any lucrative results, whereupon the company's interest waned, and it began to concentrate, like most of its competitors, on synthesizing new drugs in laboratories.

There were exceptions to the anti-plant drift. In Indianapolis in 1954, the Eli Lilly phytochemist and pharmacognosist Gordon Svoboda, planning a survey of the properties of four hundred and forty plants, included a pantropical ornamental, native to Madagascar, called *Catharanthus roseus*, or rosy periwinkle. Svoboda knew that in the Philippines the rosy periwinkle was considered a commendable anti-diabetic agent. He devoted the better part of ten years to the plant, along the way isolating thirty-six of the rosy periwinkle's ninety reported alkaloids. He was rewarded with two crystalline substances, vinblastine and vincristine—brand-new and unusually effective treatments for Hodgkin's disease and childhood leukemia, respectively. They were marketed as Velban and Oncovin.

Up to then, no alkaloid from any plant had figured in cancer therapy. Now that Svoboda's discoveries were in production, his appetite for raw material was insatiable. To make an ounce of either drug called for sixteen tons of periwinkle. Lilly had operatives all over the world gobbling up the stuff, but they couldn't find enough, so the company began growing its own on a plantation in Texas. Lilly was well rewarded: for a while, it sold a hundred million dollars' worth of Velban and Oncovin annually. Richard Schultes, who has long believed that some of the ways and means of jungle medicine should be accepted as inexplicable, felt himself rewarded when he heard Svoboda describe his periwinkle feat as "half alchemy and half witchcraft."

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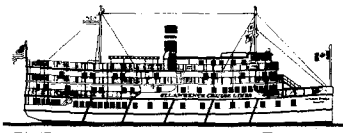

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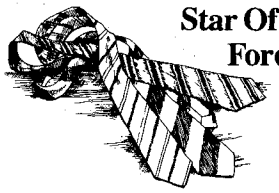

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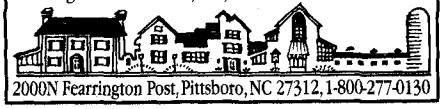

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back. The National Cancer Institute alone, at last report, was investigating fifteen thousand plants and other organisms every year. Synthetic chemistry, biotechnology, and microbiology still rule the pharmaceutical roost, but the new attitude was exemplified this past January by a two-day symposium at Rockefeller University, in New York City, where nearly four hundred people, most of them with a Ph.D. in one scientific discipline or another, spent two days discussing "Tropical Forest Medical Resources and the Conservation of Biodiversity." The gathering had been convened by the New York Botanical Garden's economic-botany institute and by the Periwinkle Project, a program run by a nonprofit Manhattan organization called the Rainforest Alliance. In its literature the alliance reminds its friends that fifty million acres of forest are disappearing annually—nearly a hundred a minute—and that as they are lost so is a plant species an hour, any one of which might have turned out to be a long-sought panacea.

Michael Balick and Sarah Laird, the organizers of the symposium, invited Schultes to come down from Cambridge for the occasion. He took no active part in colloquies like "Success Stories in Plant-Derived Medicine" (Gordon Svoboda, who is now a consulting pharmacognosist, was a featured performer in that one), but he loomed large among the cast of characters. So many of the younger people present who had only heard of him were eager to meet him that before long, to keep from being overrun, he took off his name tag.

Despite the relatively low priority that the big pharmaceutical companies had been giving to plant medicine, the makeup of the symposium suggested that they were beginning to hedge their bets. Among the sponsors or advisers or participants named in its program were SmithKline Beecham, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Merck Sharp & Dohme, and Monsanto. The company that most interested Schultes, however, was a fledgling California outfit called Shaman Pharmaceuticals. It deals exclusively in plant-derived medicines that have been prescribed by shamans for use in their own environment. Fourteen of the company's staff of twenty-six have Ph.D.s. Schultes was one of its first ethnobotanical advisers, and most of its other advisers have been his students. Shaman Pharmaceuticals has begun clinical testing on four products—an antiviral, an antifungal, and two analgesics. Its founder, an enterprising young woman named Lisa Conte, thinks that the antiviral medicine, which her laboratory technicians winnowed from a fast-growing plant found from Mexico down to Paraguay, could—if it gets Food and Drug Administration approval and goes on sale—become a billion-dollar item. That would not displease Schultes. In the event that Shaman's stock ever goes public, he has an option to buy several thousand shares at a very advantageous price.

At the end of the symposium, the participants—those, anyway, who had paid an extra twenty dollars for the privilege—trooped over to the Union Club for cocktails. Here Schultes's name tag was irrelevant, for the party was being given in his honor. Its sponsors had wondered what would make a suitable gift for their drawing card, and they settled on something they were sure he would appreciate: a watercolor of—if he didn't object to their not presenting it under its Latin name—a rosy periwinkle. Schultes had been asked to give a ten-minute response, and generously obliged with one that went on for nearly half an hour. "It was almost like being in Bio 104 all over again," one auditor said. "I couldn't figure out until afterward, though, just what was missing. And then it hit me. Of course—the blowgun!"

Until his heart acted up in 1989, Schultes liked to go back to his jungle haunts at least every couple of years.

(His enforced change of habit was all right with his wife; Dorothy was afraid that nowadays sharpshooting government agents might take a very visible white man prowling around down there for a narcotics hustler.) By then, he had focussed his taxonomic attention far and wide. There was a standing invitation to stop by Malaysia. There was Sweden, where his old friend and travelling companion Bo Holmstedt was retired. Not far from Stockholm was the recently renamed St. Petersburg, with the welcoming botanists of the Komarov Botanical Institute. There were lab tests to be carried out and lectures to be given from Afghanistan to West Germany

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and such other places as Argentina, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, France, Hawaii, Holland, Mexico, Oman, Spain, Sri Lanka, and Venezuela.

For Schultes, however, England was always the foreign country that counted most: England was Spruceland. He began going there in 1947, to scrutinize earlier explorers' collections of rubber plants, and for the last twenty years or so he has contrived to make further pilgrimages almost annually and has become increasingly British himself along the way. He routinely spells "honor" with a "u," and he will not settle for an "among" when "amongst" can serve. He is currently being doubly and transatlanticly "honoured." In London, he is receiving the Linnean Gold Medal—botany's equivalent of a Nobel Prize—from the Linnean Society, of which he was a fellow from 1950 until 1987, when he was elevated to Foreign Member. Back in Cambridge, a week later, on Commencement Day, it's the Harvard Medal—for "extraordinary service to the University."

Next year, he will be making yet another European journey. The hundredth anniversary of Richard Spruce's death will be observed in September, and appropriate ceremonies, with Schultes a prominent participant, are scheduled to take place in Coneysthorpe, Yorkshire, where Spruce spent his later years, and where Schultes is by now a familiar figure. During one of his visits to the humble cottage in which his English prototype died, Schultes arranged to have a plaque installed. During another visit, he found, dumped in an attic corner, some field notes of Spruce's that, when the tenancy next changed, might have been thrown away. Thanks to Schultes's vigilance, these are now safely enshrined in London's Royal Botanic Gardens. Schultes has already had Spruce's tilting tombstone straightened, and has had Spruce's "Notes of a Botanist on the Amazon and Andes" rescued from obscurity and reprinted, so the whole world can have access to it. As long as Richard Schultes lives, Richard Spruce won't die. —E. J. Kahn, Jr.

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Tisdall Chardonnay 1990 from Australia has a buttery pineapple flavor with hints of petrol and toasted nuts. Quite complex for $14.30.—*Tony Aspler in the Toronto Star.*

Sounds a little too complex for us.

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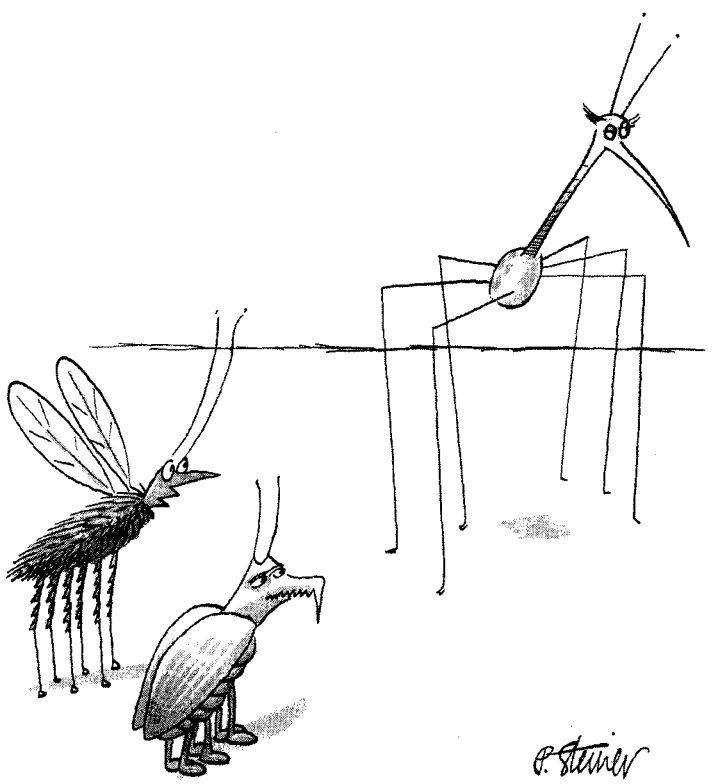
THE CURRENT CINEMA

True Stories

"Documentary" is a word that strikes terror in the hearts of many moviegoers—terror of being lectured at, terror of being trapped in the excruciating, clock-watching boredom of a high-school civics class. The idea that a movie might want to teach us something seems almost unnatural, since most people go to the movies for fun, for fantasy, for "escape"—and the sober, responsible, high-minded values of education are often the very things they're trying to escape from. Nothing kills the pleasure of a movie like the feeling that there's going to be a quiz at the end of it. These days, though, the entertainment that Hollywood movies provide isn't much of an escape route; it's more like a transfer from one claustrophobic classroom to another—from the lecture hall to the Psych-101 lab, where experimenters are recording our responses to a controlled set of stimuli. The market-research-generated formulas of studio filmmaking have produced a kind of entertainment that is, despite its cheerful tone and its air of carefree pleasure, essentially academic. In this context, documentaries start to look more attractive. Even though they may retain, in the audience's consciousness, an off-putting aura of worthiness, documentaries also promise to show us people and places and stories that we haven't seen a thousand times before, and in a form that doesn't (or doesn't necessarily) drain the life from everything inside it. They seem to accommodate the messy, accidental stuff of human experience more easily than the scrupulously engineered narratives of studio movies do. If you're stultified by the predictability of Hollywood product, a good documentary, full of unfamiliar sights and sounds, can refresh your interest in movies.

Over the past couple of months, quite a few accomplished and absorbing nonfiction films have turned up on New York screens, mostly for fleeting runs in small theatres. Before the wave of big summer movies engulfs everything, I'd like to devote some space to three recent documentaries. They're as different from each other as movies can be. The word "documentary" doesn't, after all, designate a genre with a fixed set of conventions. Nonfiction filmmaking, like nonfiction writing, covers a nearly boundless range of possible styles, techniques, and subjects: it can take the form of passionate advocacy journalism or meticulously researched history or autobiographical reflection, or any combination thereof. Documentary is a flexible concept—flexible enough to suggest plenty of ways to escape the ever-tighter confines of Hollywood entertainment formulas.

"Incident at Oglala." Michael Apted's film is the most widely distributed and heavily promoted of the current documentaries, largely because its executive producer and (offscreen) narrator is a movie star: Robert Redford. It's an investigative report on the case of Leonard Peltier, an American Indian Movement activist who was convicted of killing two F.B.I. agents in a 1975 shootout on the Pine Ridge reservation, in South Dakota. The movie contends that Peltier (who has been serving time for the murders since 1977) was railroaded by the F.B.I., which was hostile to AIM and was frustrated by the acquittal in an earlier trial of two other suspects. In its zeal to nail an AIM Indian for the crime, the argument runs, the Bureau manufactured evidence against Peltier and conspired to suppress potentially exculpatory information; and the trial judge excluded material that Peltier's lawyers considered crucial to the defense. The movie doesn't require us to believe that Peltier is innocent (although the filmmakers clearly think he is). The truth about the events at Pine Ridge remains murky and unresolved. The filmmakers concentrate on demonstrating that Peltier didn't get a fair trial, and that's not an inherently dramatic approach: the movie is built on an accumulation of subtle discrepancies and nagging doubts, rather than on a sense of inexorable progress toward a smoking-gun solution. For the most part, Apted guides us through this tangle of ambiguous evidence and back-and-forth legal maneuvering with patient, unobtrusive skill. He falters only in a longish sequence about contradictions in ballistics evidence: it's hard to keep track of all the guns, bullets, test-firing results, and expert analyses that the movie throws at us.



"Once, we were all bugs. Now suddenly she's an insect."

Apted, a British director who works on big-budget pictures ("Coal Miner's Daughter," "Class Action") as well as on documentaries (the superb "35 Up," released here earlier this year), doesn't go in for stylistic flourishes, and the cool, conservative rationality of his manner makes the movie's arguments seem all the more irrefutable. "Incident at Oglala" never tries to whip us into a frenzy of indignation. It just shows us what life was like at Pine Ridge, and how determined the government was to keep Native Americans from asserting their rights; and

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by the time the picture is over we're seething. This movie's restrained, lawyerly laying out of a pattern of injustice is far more vivid and engrossing than Apted's recent "Thunderheart," which is a fictional treatment of similar material. That film's script (by John Fusco) gives the war between the F.B.I. and the Indian-rights movement the dramatic shape of a conventional mystery-thriller: the plot, which is supposed to make us breathless with excitement, keeps intruding on the movie's real interest, which is essentially documentary. In "Incident at Oglala," Apted is able to focus on everything that "Thunderheart," tantalizingly, confines to the background: the day-to-day texture of reservation existence; the contrast between wide-open Great Plains landscapes and the close-woven net of the legal system; the voices of Indians speaking for themselves, in their own words and with their own cadences. "Incident at Oglala" is imbued with a sense of the long history of mistrust and antagonism that led up to the Pine Ridge firefight and the Peltier trial, and this perspective gives extra force to the filmmakers' immediate political message. This story holds our attention with something at least as compelling as the ordinary mechanics of movie suspense. In "Incident at Oglala," as in all good documentaries, everything we see and hear makes us want to know more: every detail seems to open up the possibility of a larger, undiscovered story.

"The Restless Conscience." This movie, by Hava Kohav Beller, has all the standard characteristics of a good-for-you, "educational" documentary. Its subject is a noble one: the history of German resistance to Nazism. Its funding comes from such respectable and generally unadventurous sources as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. And Beller's style is sobersided and utterly traditional. The movie is a craftsmanlike assemblage of the most familiar documentary resources: still photographs, archival footage, talking-heads interviews, and solemn, omniscient voice-over narration by a man with a deep voice. It's a terrific picture. Beller tells the stories of a variety of resisters, many of whom were involved in the generals' plot that culminated in the July 20, 1944, bombing of Hitler's headquarters. That assassination attempt was the most widely known act of German resistance during the Nazi regime, but "The Restless Conscience" reminds us that it wasn't by any means the only act, and that Army officers weren't the Führer's only enemies in Germany. (They were simply the people who had the best chance of actually deposing him.) The film describes earlier attempts to undermine the Reich through clandestine diplomatic initiatives. The civilian lawyer Adam von Trott zu Solz, working out of the Foreign Office, used his official business abroad as a cover for secret meetings with diplomats from England and other countries; he tried, vainly, to convince them to lend their support to resistance movements within Germany. Others whose efforts are recounted here include a labor leader, students, aristocrats, ordinary soldiers, and clergymen (notably the great moral theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer). Most of them didn't survive the war. After the failure of the July 20th plot, the regime moved swiftly to execute its opponents; there's startling footage here of the ludicrous, hysterical show trials that the Reich staged in the desperate final months of the war.

The first-person reminiscences in "The Restless Conscience" are primarily those of widows, relatives, and friends—people who may not have participated directly in the activities of the resisters but nonetheless shared their secrets and their sense of constant, overwhelming danger. These interviews are extremely moving, rich with lovingly recalled anecdotal detail. But the most remarkable passages in the film come from one of the few surviving resisters, a man named Axel von dem Bussche, who served in an infantry regiment on the Eastern Front. As we listen to him describe a mass execution of Jewish prisoners, which he witnessed helplessly, we can see in his impatient gestures and his pained groping for precise language the full emotional effect of the events that he's recalling—sense the deep shame that spurred him to conspire against his government. At one point in the interview, Bussche closes his eyes for a few seconds, and we can't tell whether he's trying to visualize the past more clearly or whether it's an involuntary reaction, a shutting-down reflex that his body learned during the war and never unlearned. We feel as if we were seeing the consequences of history in the most immediate way—in a gesture that's barely more than a physical tic. "The Restless Conscience" comes up with a lot of revelatory moments like that—epiphanies generated by scrupulous, nuts-and-bolts documentary filmmaking rather than by any extraordinary artistry. Beller's plain, unembellished style is all that the great subject of "The Restless Conscience" really needs: the movie's relative artlessness is a sign of respect, and its thoroughness is the proof of its passion.

"Cousin Bobby." Jonathan Demme's film about his cousin Robert Castle, an Episcopal pastor who works in Harlem, has a loose, friendly home-movie quality that's weird but appealing. Bobby is a chunky, balding, sixtyish priest who leads his poor parishioners on protest marches, delivers fiery speeches on the evils of racism, and generally stirs things up, sixties style, on behalf of the disadvantaged, the neglected, and the oppressed. In his strolling conversation with his cousin Jonathan, whom he hasn't seen in more than thirty years, he keeps veering off from leisurely family anecdotes into rapid-fire radical sermons, and the movie does its best to follow the erratic, distracted rhythm of his discourse. "Cousin Bobby" seems random and ragged at first, but it becomes more involving as it goes along. After a while, we realize that Demme's offhand, incredibly casual approach is drawing us into an unusual kind of intimacy with Bobby and the ravaged urban world he lives in. The movie wants the audience to get to know Bobby just as his cousin did, and it tries to reproduce the odd, intermittent nature of developing friendship—a process that in this case also includes a full, felt understanding of the priest's political ideas. For all its surface nonchalance, "Cousin Bobby" is a brilliantly original portrait of a complex personality: it does justice to both the continuities and the discontinuities of its subject's life story. Demme, who is onscreen a fair amount, acts as a genial, low-pressure host; his manner is an invitation to the audience to join in the family feeling that's growing between him and his cousin. And once we're all hanging out together Bobby's fierce vision of community really takes hold of our imagination.

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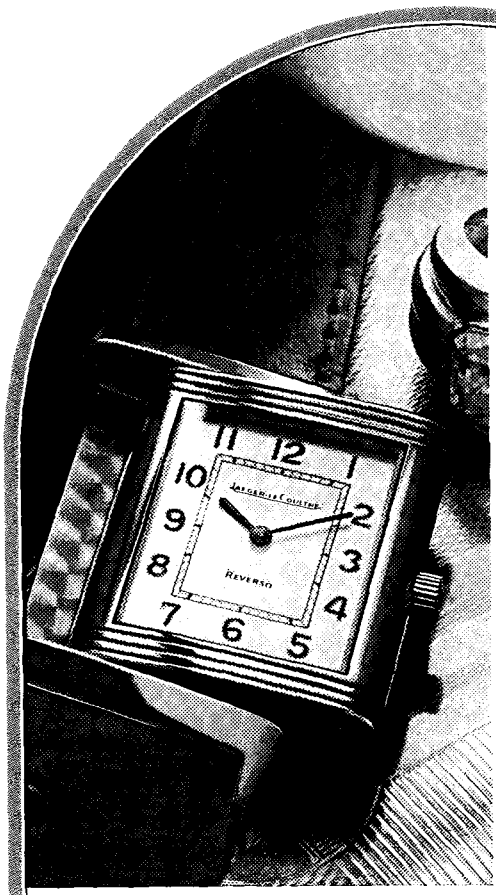
"Cousin Bobby" ends up being a lovely, amiably persuasive demonstration of the personal sources of political conviction. That's entertainment.

BACK at the multiplex, there's "Alien^3," the latest and perhaps the last installment of the science-fiction horror series that began with "Alien" in 1979. The conclusion of this picture doesn't leave much room for a sequel. (Of course, a "prequel" is always a possibility. "√Alien," maybe?) Here the heroine of the previous films, Ripley (Sigourney Weaver), crash-lands on a godforsaken planet whose population consists of a couple of dozen mean-looking convicts running some sort of dilapidated foundry. The unfriendliness of the indigenous population is the least of Ripley's problems; she has, unwittingly, brought one of those nasty, dripping, sharp-toothed aliens with her in the spacecraft. The setup guarantees the basic, gut-level suspense of the previous pictures. The script (by David Giler, Walter Hill, and Larry Ferguson) is designed to keep us asking ourselves the fundamental questions: Who will get eaten by an alien? In what order? Is the next one going to be too grisly to watch? In contrast to its immediate predecessor, James Cameron's "Aliens" (1986), which featured a vast horde of monsters and a seemingly endless supply of weaponry, "Alien^3," directed by David Fincher, has only a single full-grown alien and no weapons at all. (Because of the volatile nature of the planet's residents, lethal implements are strictly forbidden.) The threatened human beings have to figure out a way to destroy their enemy with old-fashioned ingenuity.

A little old-fashioned moviemaking ingenuity might have kept this picture breathing to the end, but Fincher, an ace music-video director (Don Henley's "The End of the Innocence," Madonna's "Vogue"), doesn't seem to have the skill to make even the simplest action sequence coherent, or the patience to give the audience the narrative information it needs. Although he's a gifted imagemaker—the film is much livelier visually than Cameron's installment—the striking images never quite add up. The unreadably fast cutting in some of the gorier sequences is a sort of blessing; we're just as happy not to know *exactly* what's happening. But in the long climactic scene, in which Ripley and the cons try to maneuver



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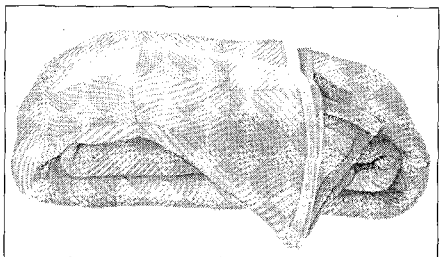

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the beast through a maze of passageways and into a narrow area where they can pour molten something on it, Fincher's indifference to exposition and spatial clarity becomes maddening. We're trapped in these elaborate sets and have no better idea where we are than the monster does. And our interest expires long before the alien has hissed its last. Once you're out of the theatre, you feel a huge sense of relief. After the claustrophobic confusion of "Alien^3," even real life looks like an escape. —TERRENCE RAFFERTY

O Pioneers!

AMERICAN movies have become a soda fountain of youth, keeping homegrown actors in perpetual adolescence. Now they do it to imported talent, too. That strapping Aussie actress Nicole Kidman stars in the new historical fantasy "Far and Away" as Shannon Christie, the headstrong only child of a wealthy Irish landowner (Robert Prosky). She seems a decade younger than she did three years ago in the down-under thriller "Dead Calm." The spoiled-rich-girl role has a lot to do with it; so does Shannon's coltish courtship with a rebellious scrapper played by Tom Cruise. A self-styled modern lass in 1892, Shannon suffocates under her mother's thumb. Resisting pressure to marry her father's estate manager (dashing Thomas Gibson), she dreams of fleeing to America and joining the Oklahoma land rush. After a tenant farmer's embittered son, Joseph Donelly (Cruise), botches an attempt to kill her father, Shannon decides that he's the right man to take along—as her servant.

Despite all the publicity about the film's physical grandeur and the Irish heritage of the director, Ron Howard, "Far and Away" centers on the spectacle of the real-life spouses Cruise and Kidman flirting and jockeying for the camera. It's like a Burton-Taylor vehicle retooled for teenyboppers. At one point, Shannon's mother strips and cleans Joseph and tends his wounds, placing a chamber pot over his privates; Kidman wins her biggest laughs when she lifts the pot and then, visibly impressed, turns back for a second look. Prurient interest aside, there's not much going on behind her baby blues.

You may be willing to accept the broad farce and melodrama for the sake of the scenery, shot in an imposing new Panavision Super 70 process. But when Shannon and Joseph reach America you keep waiting for them to light out for the territories. They're stranded for what feels like half a century in Boston (actually, Dublin in disguise), where Shannon plucks chickens and Joseph becomes a bare-knuckled club fighter for an Irish pol. In this swollen midsection, designed to portray the backside of the American Dream and of America's favorite young star, the couple share a room (in a brothel!) as brother and sister—an arrangement that allows Kidman to ogle Cruise's butt while Cruise admires her nude back and the curve of her breast. The love scenes are meant to be wholesome and titillating simultaneously; they might please fan-mag readers. (Gable and Colbert generated more amorous electricity when they shared a room in "It Happened One Night," with Gable baring only his chest.) Cruise displays his buffness in a series of bruising prizefights, where he outwits all comers with his fancy feintwork and snares the eye of a fetching burlesque gal (Michelle Johnson). Most of the boxing is cut like the baseball in "The Babe": Cruise comes to the line, ducks and bobs, takes a hit or two, then lands a knockout. The fighting, unlike the romance, is all climax. Cruise's performance consists of psych-ups, explosions, and rest periods, and at times it's painfully contemporary. When he wins, you expect him to pump his arms and exclaim "Yes!" He and Kidman are a couple of kids playing "Let's pretend."

When Joseph starts working for the railroad, the story line begins to resemble something out of "How the West Was Won." Howard mounts the land rush with aplomb, but by then we've ceased to care. The screenwriter, Bob Dolman—he's Martin Short's brother-in-law and Andrea Martin's ex-husband—wrote for SCTV, and it's too bad that SCTV is no longer around to satirize "Far and Away." I got through it by imagining Martin Short and Catherine O'Hara as Joseph and Shannon, with Joe Flaherty and Andrea Martin as their respective rivals.

O'HARA and Martin were late-night pioneer women—the only female members of the fabulously talented SCTV troupe. In a fizzy, funny, and sometimes unnerving documentary called "Wisecracks," opening a two-week run at the Film Forum on June 3rd,

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the Canadian filmmaker Gail Singer explores the strictures on women comedians while showcasing performers ranging from Phyllis Diller, Whoopi Goldberg, and the talk-show host Jenny Jones (in her standup days) to a trio of madly inventive lip-synchers known as the Clichettes. In interviews and clips, Singer's subjects manage to be witty about everything from P.M.S. to pro-lifers, including the hostility these standups sometimes face from audiences and promoters alike. The sexual crassness that sets the tone in many comedy clubs, and works against male comics with any sensibility, often squashes a spectator's responsiveness to female comics. Even self-consciously hip improv groups and sketch artists can reduce a woman to playing, in Emily Levine's phrase, "the girl." (Without Jan Hooks and Nora Dunn, "Saturday Night Live" has become more of a boys' club than ever.)

"Wisecracks" isn't a one-issue documentary, and it doesn't adhere to a single point of view. Jenny Lecoat implicitly criticizes those women who hide behind personae, while Deborah Theaker, performing in the guise of a strangled-voiced basket case, brings down the house when she does a bit about Emily Brontë on a visit to the doctor. The director has a sure sense of balance: she knows that what sounds portentous in theory can be hilarious in practice. If Robin Tyler tends to be messianic when she talks to the interviewer, she's a hoot when she talks dirty to a plant. "Wisecracks" succeeds as investigation because it also succeeds as entertainment. Singer doesn't pose any topic that performers like Maxine Lapiduss, Ellen DeGeneres, Sandra Shamas, Joy Behar, and Lotus Weinstock can't riff on or parody. The sight of the Clichettes in naked-man bodysuits, with detachable genitalia, sums up the glorious effrontery of women invading a traditionally hostile "male" field. In all the recent tributes to Johnny Carson, no one noted how few female comics became regular guests on "The Tonight Show." In 1979, Carson told *Rolling Stone*, "It's because of the old role models that are assigned. A woman is feminine, a woman is not abrasive, a woman is not a hustler." He admitted, "The ones that try sometimes are a little aggressive for my taste." "Wisecracks" breaks through that taste barrier; it's better on the other side. —Michael Sragow

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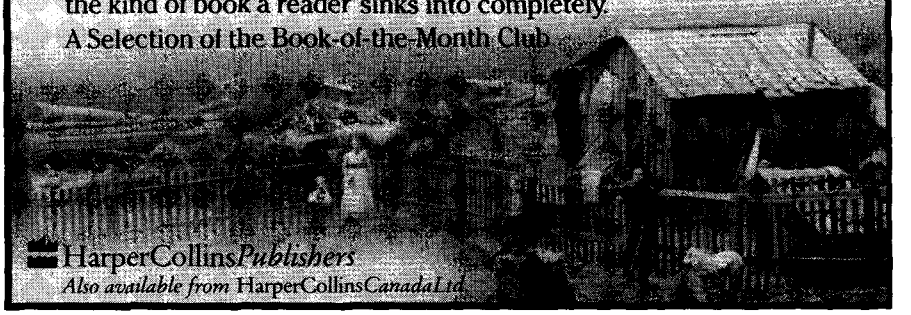

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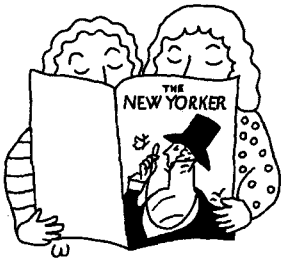

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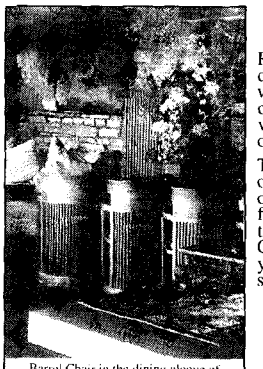

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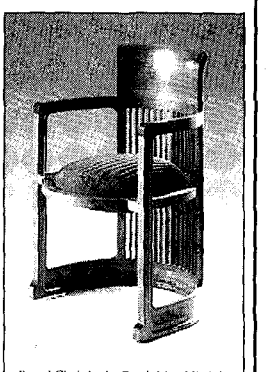

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TWENTY to forty thousand people—estimates vary—will gather in Rio de Janeiro next week to try to turn aside humanity's collective assault on its climate, water, and diverse forms of nature. The throng, which will overwhelm the city's resources, will include the largest assemblage of world leaders ever, their entourages—some of them huge—and hordes of people representing concerned private groups from many places. Most of them talk about the success or failure of their work in sober but far-reaching language: the web of life is at risk; we need a second industrial revolution to undo the consequences of the first. The struggle to stabilize the environment is described alternately as a race against time and as a project that will take a hundred years of coördinated effort. Japan actually has a plan—New Earth 21—that divides the next century into decades and gives the world community tasks to perform on behalf of the global environment in each of them.

The formal name of the so-called Earth Summit is UNCED, for United Nations Conference on Environment and Development—a confection that translates as quid pro quo: the rich societies of the industrialized North want everyone to begin being sensible about the environment; the people of the Southern latitudes maintain that those who polluted the environment en route to great prosperity are really asking the less well off to take steps that will keep them that way. We will play the environmental game, the developing countries say, only if the developed world greatly expands the aid that it provides us. The United States, backed more or less by Britain and France, opposed this linkage when the idea of an Earth Summit arose, nearly three years ago. The stated concern was that development issues would crowd out serious attention to the environment; but the notion of redistributing wealth probably had a lot more to do with Washington's position. Japan supported the developing countries, rather to their surprise, and they won the argument.

The scale of UNCED is as vast as its mandate: the basic document, called Agenda 21, exceeds eight hundred pages and covers a hundred and fifteen topics. The ten days of meetings required two and a half years of preparation—most of it intense—by diplomats and bureaucrats from just about all countries, and also by sundry high achievers who signed on to help nudge the process along. In the days ahead, Rio may seem to be an elaborate setting for an Evelyn Waugh novel—people of every sort rattling around in a city that can barely cope with them and wrestling with problems that none of them fully understand but that excite passionate disagreement.

Expectations for the conference run from low to modest. It is condemned to succeed, some say, because no one wants it to fail. Others are less sure. The sponsors describe the affair as the start of a process, not the end, and say that it should be judged accordingly. No one disagrees with that. The question is whether the body of agreement that emerges will be enough to launch a useful process. The fourth, and final, round of preparations, at United Nations headquarters in New York, ended inauspiciously on April 4th; most, though by no means all, of the people whom I spoke with there at the time sounded pessimistic. "The dream is dead," one Western diplomat said. "The exhilaration is gone. The atmosphere is flat." Bad timing has been part of the problem. "The U.N. must learn never to hold a conference during an American election year," said Singapore's Tommy Koh, a world-class diplomat, who was the chairman of the conference's Preparatory Committee—or PrepCom, as it was called. The PrepCom's purpose was to move the issues as close to agreement as possible, so that the leaders, when they met, would be able to approve various conventions instead of being overburdened by tough negotiations. Koh doesn't mince words; his multiple gifts are reinforced by a hardheaded, no-nonsense style. Many U.N. buffs hoped last year that he would be chosen to replace Javier Pérez de Cuéllar as the United Nations Secretary-General. Koh's comment on elections was an allusion to Washington's negative positions on the gut issues: climate control and "new and additional resources"—formal terminology for the increased aid that the developing countries insist on. "The U.N. should also avoid doing things like this when there

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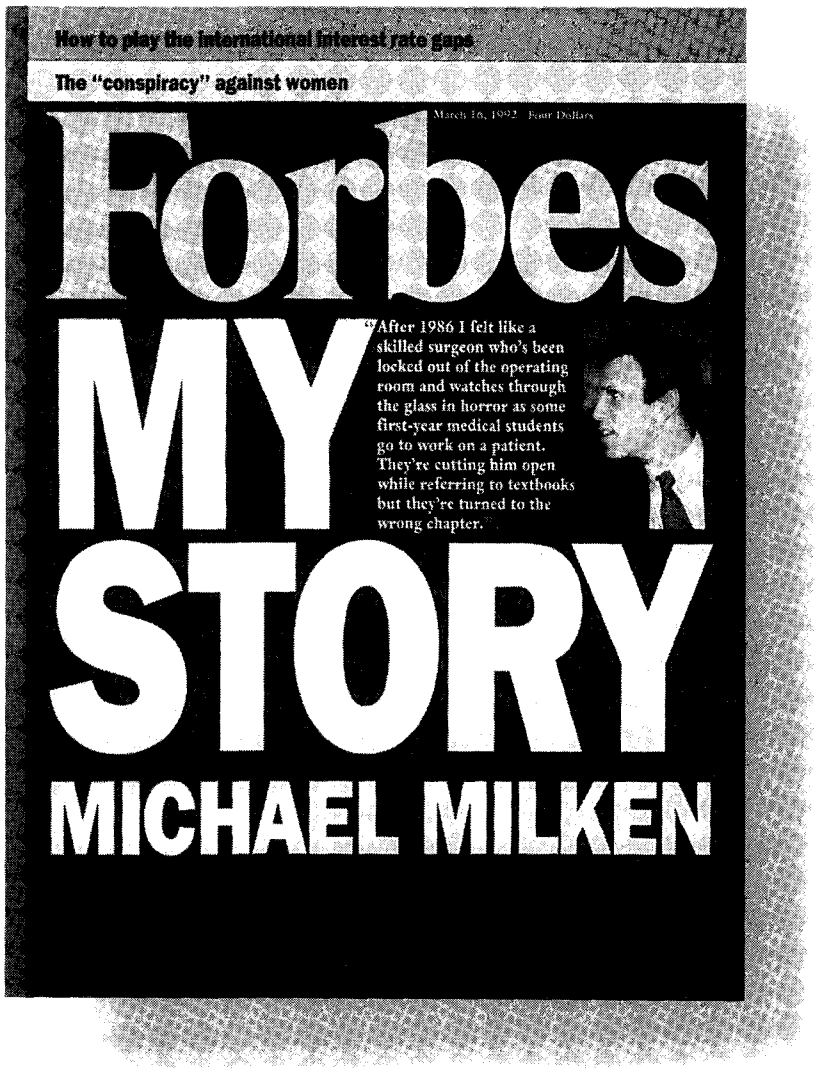
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is a major recession in the world," Koh added.

"The rich have never felt so poor, and politicians don't want to hear about it," Maurice Strong, UNCED's Secretary-General, explained.

"The Americans are saying to poor countries, 'We, too, are a debtor nation now,' " a Western ambassador to the United Nations said. "Maybe it was a mistake to deal with this globally. The Gulf War dissipated energies and left behind fatigue." He and others pointed to changes in the political climate over the past three years. In 1989, George Bush was talking about being the environmental President. It was all words. The Soviet bloc strongly supported UNCED. Now, of course, various independent republics of the former Soviet Union have a claim on Western aid and attention, as have other countries of Eastern Europe. And disgruntled developing countries elsewhere worry about what they call the West's Eurocentricity. In short, few things are as unmuddled as they were in 1989.

Some closely involved personalities worried aloud that UNCED's reach far exceeds its grasp. The world community, they say, has been asked to take steps for which it is not ready, either politically or financially. Michael Heseltine, who until recently was Britain's Environment Secretary and is the "greenest" of the Tory ministers, told Strong that UNCED's agenda was too ambitious and had greatly complicated the main task.

"This forum cannot be used to solve every country's favorite environmental problem," a plainly worried Tommy Koh said at the end of March. "How can you prioritize when everyone has an agenda of pet environmental problems? Some countries want to use UNCED to accomplish what they couldn't accomplish in other forums."

Several insiders feel that Strong also aimed too high in citing a hundred and twenty-five billion dollars as the annual sum required to cover the costs of Agenda 21. The figure is seventy billion dollars above the fifty-five billion in aid that is provided annually to the developing countries. "There is no way we can come anywhere close to that figure," one of the key personalities said, although officials and diplomats of various developing countries argued that if the West could spend that kind of money to rescue Kuwait it can spend as much to rescue the world.

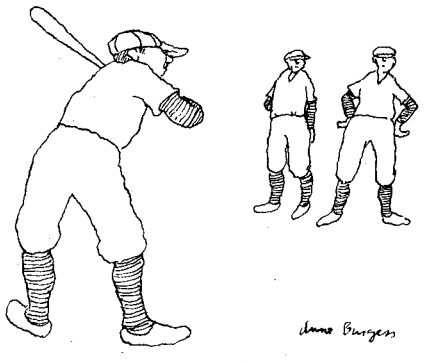
Strong, a sixty-three-year-old Canadian, is a universally admired international figure, and was the obvious choice for the job of running UNCED, if only because he distinguished himself in running the first United Nations conference on the environment, which was held in June of 1972. Like Koh, Strong would have been a widely approved choice to succeed Pérez de Cuéllar. Before taking on a series of major United Nations jobs and related tasks, he worked in the private sector for eighteen years, as the head of various corporations. "Strong crosses the North-South line and the public-private line better than anyone else in the world," one Western ambassador to the United Nations says. Strong has a deceptively unhurried, soft-spoken style; he is unruffled by skeptics. His attitude in the runup to the Rio conference was very positive. He and some of his colleagues on PrepCom do not agree that the agenda is too heavy. "UNCED isn't about any one of these things, but about all of them," he says. "They are all linked. It is systemic." Many scientists concur; they feel that the environment as a whole is threatened—certainly weakened—if any one of its parts is damaged or altered.

Toward the end of the fourth PrepCom meeting, some of the pessimists were feeling a trifle encouraged. "There is a rhythm to U.N. negotiations," Koh said. "First, you have confrontation, then a period of crisis, and then resolution."

I asked him if he was gloomy.

"Yes, I'm gloomy," he said. "But I am starting to see movement. I'm starting to see clean texts, and brackets"—holds on various items—"being removed."

"This will not lay an egg," Strong said. As for Agenda 21, which was his idea, he told me that he had seen approved language on a hundred of its hundred and fifteen items. The financial issue, he said, "will be open right up to the day, but it is moving." And would there be progress on climate control? "At best, it will be a first step," he said. "This isn't a conference on climate change. It is about how to change economic behavior."



The PrepCom ended at 5 A.M. on April 4th, with delegates and members of the various working groups exhausted by days of virtually non-stop negotiations. It had taken one group the entire last week to bridge differences over whether to put a comma in a passage of the "objectives" section of Agenda 21. A friend asked Tommy Koh how well he had been sleeping during this period. "Like a baby," Koh said. "I wake up every hour and cry myself to sleep again." A great many heads were knocked together—by Koh—and some modest progress was made, although not enough to brighten the forecasts for Rio. The conference charter—a bitterly divisive set of principles—was agreed to at 3:30 A.M. on April 4th, but only after Koh had impanelled a fresh set of negotiators the day before. Some passages may be reopened in Rio. There was agreed-upon language on almost all of Agenda 21. An eleventh-hour agreement on the financing of development aid was briefly within reach, or seemed to be, but then that bubble burst. A few other major issues were moved off dead center, but not far. Some days earlier, a United Nations ambassador from one of the European Community countries had said acidly, "The world is awash in green groups. But the Rio conference is costing more money than is going to be spent on saving the earth."

That kind of comment is too dismissive. What it reflected was the absence of leadership at the PrepCom from key governments. The policies being deployed there by most of those governments were ultra-cautious and narrowly focussed—aimed at immediate concerns, and only barely at problems contained in Agenda 21. Whether the leaders who matter lift their sights in Rio as they become more directly involved with the issues is the crucial variable. If they don't, one astute insider says, Rio will be "a quiet failure masquerading as a success."

JUST which of the myriad issues will cause the most trouble at Rio isn't yet clear. Different regions have

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different priorities. Africans are pushing a cluster of poverty issues. Asians are strongly concerned with maintaining control of their forests. In both regions, the quality of the link between environment and development is vitally important. Countries that see arable land disappearing into expanding deserts try to focus attention on this pernicious process, which is called desertification; one Asian ambassador to the United Nations claims that the area of advancing desert in Asia and Africa is equivalent in size to the China-India landmass.

The only issue to which the Bush Administration warms and on which it has taken an advance position is deforestation. It was hoped that the PrepCom might produce a statement of principles on forests; a strong effort was made, but it failed. The effort will be made again in Rio, and it could go either way. Countries with big rain forests have proclaimed their sovereign right to do whatever they please with them. Some of these countries talk as if concessions from the rich North might soften their position on deforestation, but concessions on the scale they probably have in mind are unlikely to be made—and even if they were made, insiders say, the hard-liners on the right to deforestation probably wouldn't budge.

What becomes of the rain-forest issue will bear heavily on other fateful questions—notably biodiversity and climate control. No one can reliably estimate the number of plant and animal species on earth or the rate at which they are being lost. However, the first number is well into the millions, and the second—the number being lost—is judged by many biologists to be about a thousand times the normal rate. And well over half the species considered most heavily at risk are native to tropical forests. These forests also, of course, function as sinks, absorbing carbon dioxide, or CO_2, from the atmosphere and thereby stabilizing the global climate. As the producer of about one-fourth of the world's CO_2, America is anxious about preserving the sinks. More than half the aggregate greenhouse gas, which creates the warming effect, is CO_2. Yet among industrialized nations only the United States has opposed capping CO_2 emissions. The other parties have accepted a target and a timetable: the target is to restrict CO_2 emissions to levels reached in the year 1990; the timetable calls for paring emissions to those levels by the year 2000. "The U.S. is out in front on forests, but is arguing a tough brief," said a British diplomat who was echoing an all but unanimous view. He meant that it is hard to hold the high ground on deforestation when your position on climate control is judged politically absurd (and when you are busily depleting your own majestic forests).

Third World governments, and especially those with rain forests, observe that the rich North produces far more CO_2 than the sinks of the South can absorb. Let the high-consumption societies do something about their way of life, and then maybe we'll listen, say the less well off and the outright poor. Malaysia takes the most unyielding line on deforestation, and seems unembarrassed by stout support from India, which has stood by and watched the larger part of its own forests disappear.

Much the most influential parties in UNCED are the United States, Japan, and the European Community. Equally critical, however, is the role of the G-77, a group of Third World countries that numbered seventy-seven when they banded together as the nonaligned movement of the United Nations many years ago. The group now has a hundred and twenty-eight members, but the name hasn't changed. The G-77 used to try to play the rival First and Second Worlds—the Western and Eastern blocs—against each other, but it sees its vocation now as heading off efforts, real or assumed, by the rich to manipulate and exploit the non-rich. The G-77's key players in UNCED are China, Brazil, and Malaysia; some diplomats would add India to that short list, and Mexico has been a steadying and constructive force.

What is made of the Rio conference, however, will depend most on decisions taken by just two of the parties—America and Japan. Their positions are a brilliant contrast—a caricature, really, of their divergent political and entrepreneurial styles. Washington remains ambivalent about the United Nations. With the Cold War over and the United Nations no longer condemned to a minor role,

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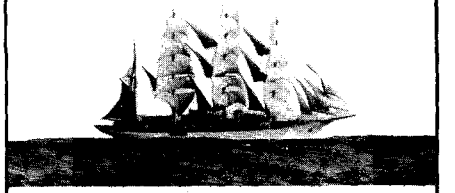

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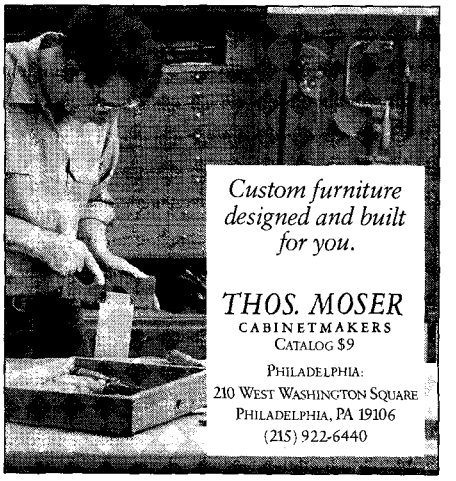

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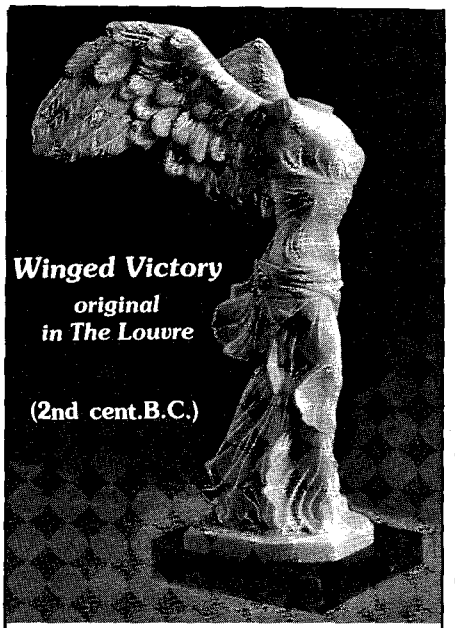

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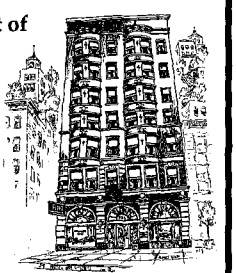

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the organization suits Washington's purposes ideally as long as it can be made an instrument of American policy, as it was during the Persian Gulf crisis. But when the United Nations becomes a forum for policies that lie beyond United States control or that seem to harbor risks for American interests, Washington takes a darker view. Washington finds it hard to accept the notion that military power and political influence no longer have a one-to-one relationship (if they ever actually did). What seems vaguely clear is that the major political influence in whatever new world order emerges will be economic strength and competitive edge. America has the biggest economy and is the biggest polluter—bigger than it has to be or should be, according to its critics; these have included every one of the other members of UNCED. Washington is reluctant, especially in an election year, to take steps that might threaten economic growth or jobs or be seen as conceding a measure of authority to some new international order.

Until a little over a year ago, Japan seemed to share Washington's skepticism about UNCED. Its powerful Ministry of Finance, along with much of its political leadership, saw the process as a potential drag on the economy. But the Foreign Ministry had for some time been groping for a project with which to launch a major Japanese political initiative. Japan's contribution to the Persian Gulf crisis was strictly financial; for internal political reasons, Japanese troops are not allowed to take part in peacekeeping operations. Some alternative to Japan's "checkbook diplomacy"—which Washington either encourages or deplores, depending on the issue—was called for. UNCED impressed Japanese diplomats as ideal: it addressed issues that just might dominate world politics for decades; its aims were above reproach; there was no political downside. The Foreign Ministry then found itself pushing on a partly open door; much of Japan's establishment was already agreed on the need for a global political initiative to balance the exuberant commercial success that had created some ill will abroad. "We are tacticians, not strategists," says an important Japanese figure who has been closely involved in the UNCED preparations. "We tend to see Rio and the environment as offering Japan a key leadership role. It is tied directly to what we call *kokusaika*—the internationalization of policy, which is essential. *Kokusaika* is almost an obsession with our political and business leadership and with our people in general. Our media bombard the public with articles about how we must internationalize. Rio is happening against that background. It was tailor-made for us."

In 1970, Japan began to adopt the toughest of air and water standards, and offered industry large incentives to institute anti-pollution measures. In short, Japan got itself about as far ahead of major competitors on the pollution front as it did on the trade front. Controlling pollution meant becoming more energy-efficient. The United States, unlike Japan, is awash in cheap energy, yet it has much higher energy costs per unit of production than Japan. America takes its cheap energy for granted and wastes it. An inevitable by-product of Japan's quest for energy efficiency is an advanced technology; Europeans and Americans estimate that Japan can now sell pollution-control devices and environmentally benign equipment that is ten years ahead of everyone else's. The Japanese concur in this estimate.

"This is not cleanup equipment, although there is some of that," says Robert Fri, an authority on Japanese industrial policy and the president of Resources for the Future, a research organization dealing with the economic effects of environmental issues. "It involves cleaner and more energy-efficient devices for use in industrial development. They have been pushing their R. & D. on commercial energy efficiency for fifteen years. This is great stuff."

Two or three years ago, Japan's formidable Ministry of International Trade and Industry—or MITI, as the world knows it—began to envision a huge market for pollution-control hardware; the Third World part of the market would be financed with Japan's foreign aid. As the Foreign Ministry saw it, Japan would acquire a stronger presence in various countries—show them how to go about their own development and how to manage the environmental consequences. As MITI

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saw it, pushing Japan's environmentally benign technology even harder would reap still greater rewards in energy efficiency, and these, in turn, would sustain Japan's competitive edge over Europe and America in many product lines. Numerous Japanese products already have a pricing advantage over their competition of five or six per cent, thanks mainly to the lower energy costs involved in making them. MITI's current plan calls for halving the cost of energy per unit of production between now and the end of the decade. Briefly, a world community that decides to save itself by saving the global environment will be promoting many large Japanese interests.

New Earth 21 was conceived by MITI, and was proposed by Japan at a meeting of the G-7—the major industrialized powers—in Houston two years ago. According to a report by Shinji Fukukawa, the executive vice-president of Kobe Steel, "the plan aims, over the next hundred years, at restoring the earth's functions to its state prior to the industrial revolution." To the untutored eye, New Earth 21 is dazzling in its scope and in its assumptions about using new and improved technologies to reach lofty goals in fixed periods of time. "A one-hundred-year plan like this would be laughed at if it came from anyone but the Japanese," a senior Bush Administration official says. But the Administration's reaction to the plan has been, at best, guarded.

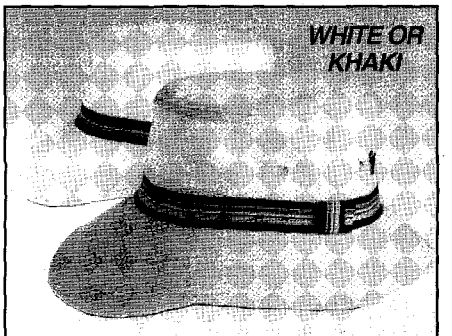
"The Japanese see a big future in environmentally sensitive technologies," one of the American UNCED negotiators says. "They began with a position like ours, and then saw a bandwagon developing in Europe and decided to jump aboard." Actually, a bandwagon of sorts had developed independently in Japan. The Foreign Ministry, MITI, and Japan's Environmental Protection Agency were backed by the Keidanren, Japan's blue-ribbon business council, and in April of 1991 the Keidanren produced a Global Environment Charter. It laid down strict guidelines, to which numerous Japanese corporations are now committed.

Other Japanese corporations are not committed, however, and some are under fire for environmental misdeeds. Moreover, Japan, like America, could not be accused of being out front on conservation questions. Both countries, like many others, have entrenched business interests that are conspicuous wrongdoers in these matters. Also, large segments of Japan's bureaucracy have been as rigid and unresponsive to UNCED as bureaucrats anywhere. Subsurface tension between opposing Japanese interest groups has created confusion about Japan's intentions at Rio, even among the Japanese themselves. Still, it looks now as if the activists had acquired the upper hand. "Activists" is a more appropriate term than "greens," which in this case is too limited; trade and environment have come to be viewed in Tokyo as two sides of the same coin. Washington is indifferent to the competitive edge that Japan is acquiring on green issues, according to a British diplomat—an America-watcher on these issues. "We hear nothing coming out of the Bush Administration, even though the commercial logic is compelling," he says.

A senior Administration figure dismisses Japan's technological lead as a "fifth-order issue," and adds, "What matters is promoting U.S. and world economic growth."

THE issue of climate control illustrates the gulf between American and Japanese attitudes. The Administration has been reluctant to grant that CO_2 causes global warming, arguing that the evidence is inconclusive and citing a need for more and harder data. Washington also notes, first, that a cap on CO_2 emissions is a largely political gesture, since it wouldn't affect the level of emissions appreciably; second, that global warming is a gradual process—hardly a problem as immediate as those of deforestation and biodiversity. Japan is less impressed, however, by the absence of conclusive data than it is by the consensus view that CO_2 is one of the primary culpable agents—and that unless the rich, high-consumption societies agree to commit themselves to some degree of self-restraint the developing countries may act just as small-mindedly in Rio.

Washington's resistance to a formal cap on CO_2 emissions is concentrated in the White House, and is partly a legacy of John Sununu, Bush's willful former chief of staff. An engineer, Sununu held strong doubts about the link between greenhouse gases and climate. Further, he felt that putting limits on CO_2 emissions would penalize American industry and restrict



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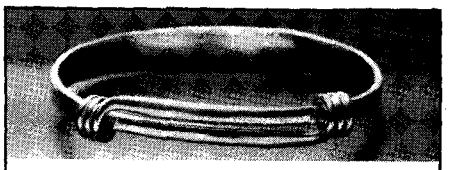

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economic growth. Sununu's derisively expressed skepticism was by all accounts infectious, at least in the White House. Michael Boskin, the chairman of Bush's Council of Economic Advisers, is also judged "brown," rather than green, on the issue of setting targets and timetables for climate control. And, according to insiders, the same can be said of C. Boyden Gray, the White House counsel and a putative environmentalist. Foreign diplomats and many Washington bureaucrats say that Sununu was always allied with Richard Darman, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, in resisting movement on environmental matters. With Sununu gone, such people regard Darman as very brown—as the chief blocker. Darman does little to discourage this judgment (which may be a trifle exaggerated). In a lecture he gave at Harvard two years ago, on what he called "American Romanticism and the Global Economy," he said, "The needy of the world will not be helped by, and will not settle for, a neo-Luddite attack on technological advance. . . . The human spirit—by definition—will not be limited to an aspiration for 'stasis.' Americans did not fight and win the wars of the twentieth century to make the world safe for green vegetables."

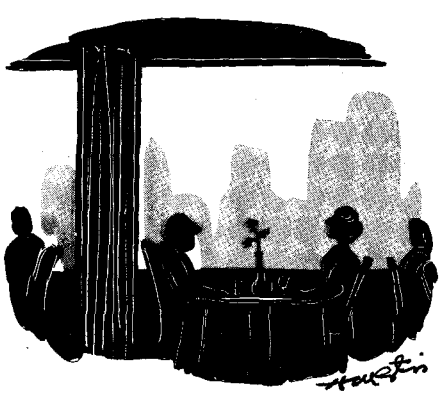
Darman, environmentalists say, worries most about the potential effects of their efforts on the budget—his province—although he sounds as if economic growth should be the major concern. His office also considers "cost-benefit analysis"—what any given environmental measure might take out of the economy and what it might add. Darman is considered much the cleverest and most resourceful of the White House personalities. He has a witty, acidulous style, and more than a few of his zingers have been directed at William K. Reilly, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. In an Administration with more than its share of mediocrities, Reilly stands apart: he is capable, balanced, and principled; unlike most of his peers, he takes only his job—not himself—seriously. But Reilly's role is limited: in bureaucratic battles over environmental policy, the director of a regulatory agency is no match for the O.M.B. director, or, certainly, for the Vice-President; Dan Quayle, in his other role, as chairman of something called the President's Council on Competitiveness, is among Reilly's adversaries and seems bent on gutting the Clean Air Act.

Litigation is a further concern of the White House. Suppose, hard-liners say, that the United States did agree to a cap on CO_2 emissions; then the environmentalists would perversely turn the step into a legal issue by claiming that the Administration was only pretending to comply, and not really doing so. The green groups in other countries are not litigious, according to this sombre argument—only our own.

"The U.S. view is that we should all start modestly," one closely involved Washington bureaucrat said recently. "What is the rush to inflict pain on oneself, especially if there are better approaches over time? Why target the year 2000? Why not 2005 or 2010?" He said that the largest share of greenhouse-gas emissions would at some stage be caused by developing countries, although he didn't say when. "And that gets you to aid and development," he cautioned. "It is a circular problem." He meant that the expanded aid being sought in UNCED would promote development in the Third World, which would, in turn, add to global warming. "Why risk damaging yourself if you are worried about what the rest of the world might do?" he asked. "We question whether targets for CO_2 emissions make any scientific or economic sense."

A more plausible explanation for the Administration's position on CO_2 emissions, especially in an election year, is a reluctance to upset coal and oil producers. "Sixty per cent of our electricity is coal-generated," one official says. "A big number of jobs are involved. Coal is the main item moved by rail. Jerking it around would have a major impact on the economy."

In late April, however, the Administration released an interagency study that confirmed what green groups, and Reilly's E.P.A. as well, had argued for some time: capping CO_2 emissions at 1990 levels would have little, if any, effect on the American economy. Also, it turns out that various steps already taken—amendments to the Clean Air Act, E.P.A.-sponsored corporate programs, various state regulations—have brought the cap well within reach. But instead of using this evidence to justify joining a world consensus, the Administration's line was yes, but: yes, we will do whatever is required to impose the cap on CO_2 emissions, but in a nonbinding fashion. Another way of putting it would be: We will do what others are doing, but in our own way; that is, we will give ourselves an out, so as to avoid yielding to an international body any measure of our right to do as we please.



On the issue of additional aid, the American position was negative during the PrepCom. Washington also opposed creating a new institution to administer such aid, preferring, like the Japanese and the Europeans, to rely on existing institutions. Chief among these is the Global Environment Facility, or G.E.F., which was set up three years ago to help developing countries find ways of protecting the environment. France and Germany proposed the G.E.F., and the World Bank administers it. But developing countries see the G.E.F. as an instrument of the haves, and strongly oppose its use to dispense aid money agreed to in the UNCED process. Instead, these countries were pressing for the creation of a "green fund," which would be much more broadly administered. Donor countries, however, felt at least as strongly that setting up a huge new fund that countries could draw upon almost as they pleased was a self-evidently poor idea. And there the issue rested until early May, when the G-77 yielded.

Toward the end of the PrepCom, the Americans surprised everyone by donating fifty million dollars to the G.E.F. The gesture coincided with a week-long negotiation on climate change, and the timing was seen by some non-American delegates as aimed at blurring American obduracy on that issue. Actually, the donation barely survived a bruising bureaucratic battle in Washington that had pitted Reilly against Darman. Reilly got the money, but only by agreeing to take it out of his E.P.A. budget, as opposed to draw-

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ing upon funds allocated to foreign aid.

Besides the stonewalling, there was a vague and tentative aspect to the American posture at the PrepCom; this was attributed to a chaotic White House, all but paralyzed by the internal stresses of the political campaign. "We are delaying a lot of decisions pending Bush's decision on whether to go to Rio," a senior American bureaucrat said in late March. "To the degree that we have a position, it isn't defensible."

THE role of the European Community, the third pivotal influence, was considered clear and constructive—at least, compared with that of the United States. "If there is a leader here, it is the E.C.," Maurice Strong told me at a late stage of the PrepCom. The E.C. promoted the idea of capping CO_2 emissions, and said O.K. to new and additional resources for the developing world. E.C. governments are pushed by the green parties—some more so than others. The Dutch and the Danes are in the vanguard of support for UNCED issues. Next come the Germans. Their federal government is squeezed between various *Länder*, or states: the ones in the north are ahead of the federal government on environmental issues, whereas the southerners trail behind it. But German industry is well ahead of the competition elsewhere in Europe on environmentally benign technology, and Germany, like Japan, spotted the potentially vast market some time ago. Maurice Strong estimates, for example, that Japan and Germany control about seventy per cent of the market for air-pollution-control equipment in the United States. Germany intends to maintain its regional advantage, but industry elsewhere in Europe is gearing up to compete for a part of that market. France is well behind the Germans on these matters, even though, typically, it now has two green parties—one in the center, the other to the left of center—and together they polled almost as many votes as the majority Socialist Party in the recent regional elections. The British are considered the laggards on the environment, at least in Northern Europe. The E.C.'s southern members—Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece—are well to the rear; they are exposed to far less pressure from green constituencies than their neighbors to the north. Still, they have not interfered with the rather advanced positions that the E.C. took corporately in New York.

The E.C.'s executive arm—the Commission—has taken the most aggressive approach to the preparations for Rio. Member states have granted the Commission competence—the right to act for them—on some environmental questions; there is disagreement, however, on just how far this authority extends. "There is a gray area," says a senior American diplomat who follows E.C. affairs. "It's hard to say where the competence lies on some environmental matters—with the Commission or with the members. On most of them, though, it looks as if the Commission could speak for members."

According to a German expert, the Commission equates control of environmental policy today with control of defense policy during the Cold War. "Environmental policy can be that dominant," he says. "The Commission doesn't have the constraints that member states have, and can get ahead of them. And the members do need a central authority, in order to avoid disharmony—situations in which one country gains temporary advantage over others by the way it adjusts to some environmental rule."

The Commission is strongly led by its president, Jacques Delors, who is a Frenchman, and who aspires to replace his fellow-Socialist François Mitterrand as President of France. "Delors wants to be respected and admired in Rio," one European ambassador who knows him well says. "He was indifferent to green issues two years ago, but he now has a thirst for information about them and keeps asking for daring proposals for Rio."

Delors seems to feel that he should sit at the top table in Rio—take part in the conference as the leader of an essentially sovereign entity. A proposal along these lines was put forward formally by the Portuguese Ambassador in New York during the PrepCom, and created a flaming row within the E.C. and also between the E.C. and Washington. The member states, acting through their representatives in Brussels, had already decided that the Commission should be a participant in the Rio conference, but just what that meant hadn't been decided. As it turned out, not many of the members were prepared to accept the Commission as

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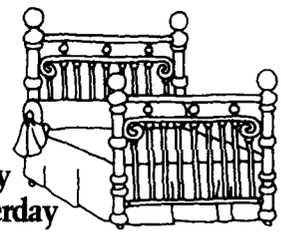

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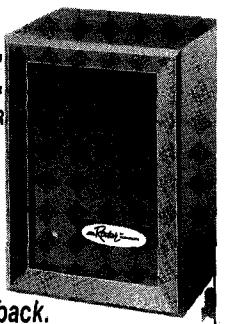

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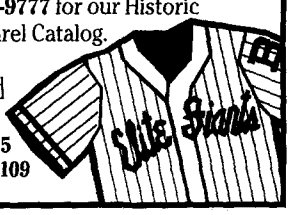

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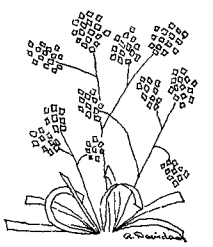
an actual peer in Rio. As for Washington, it was enraged over what seemed a ploy by the twelve-member E.C. to gain a thirteenth vote there. Under a compromise worked out within the E.C., Delors (or now, perhaps, his representative) will take part, but not as a sovereign.

The idea that the E.C. and the United States are pushing in opposite directions on environmental issues is one that irritates Bush Administration officials. Europe, they say, is having it both ways—taking credit for seemingly laudable proposals but counting on the Americans to block them. "The Europeans are setting us up as the bad guys," an American official said. The cap on CO_2 emissions was cited as an example. The E.C., Americans said, expects Bush to oppose it right up to the Rio conference; at that point, the Europeans would abandon their own proposal, on the ground that it is worth nothing without an American signature. What's more, the Bush Administration argued rather persuasively, even if we did agree to the CO_2 proposal, most of the Europeans wouldn't bother to enforce it. (It is true that some E.C. members—Italy, for one—do not comply with many of the rules and regulations that they agree to in Brussels.)



Insiders whose concern is a successful conference worried that in the end Bush would win—that E.C. members, even the most deeply committed of them, would choose to avoid an embarrassing and divisive confrontation with Washington on an issue as seemingly peripheral as CO_2 emissions, especially since there is already a lot of American-European disagreement on the table in the current round of world-trade negotiations and on other issues affecting hard-pressed economies. "John Major does not want to push George Bush into a corner," a senior British diplomat said recently. The same could be said of most of Major's E.C. colleagues. They knew that Bush wouldn't turn up at the Rio conference unless the gap between his position and the E.C. position on the most conspicuous issue could be bridged; if it wasn't bridged Bush would be odd man out there. As the event grew nearer, the gap began to narrow: Administration officials and their European counterparts groped for language that would seem to constrain CO_2 emissions, but not in the form of a binding, self-denying ordinance. By the beginning of May, they were close to agreement. By mid-May, they were there. "Bush can't go to Rio without a global-warming convention," one White House official said. "If he doesn't go, he isn't being Presidential. So we had to have a deal on global warming."

One European ambassador in Washington said around then, "There is a lot of self-righteousness in Europe. We are not as ready to criticize ourselves as the Americans are. We are tilting at them. We are ahead of them only to the extent that we have positions. But we don't really have agreement yet in Europe on a CO_2 accord. We will end up blaming the Americans for preventing us from doing the right thing."

On the other high-profile issue, new development aid, the E.C.'s position was far more responsive to Third World pressure than America's—or, for that matter, Japan's. Just before the PrepCom ended, the Mexican delegation tried to mediate. The various parties were brought together in the Mexican Mission at United Nations Plaza. A paper was produced and, mirabile dictu, reached the edge of acceptance. Neither the Americans nor the Japanese opposed what seemed a long step away from their own positions. Then, just as the Mexicans were about to pocket a successful outcome, the Dutch and the British said no. The G-77 countries had pushed them a trifle too far on a difference of opinion over some language. The surprise was general; most diplomats had expected the fuss to be made by the Americans, possibly backed by the Japanese. For the Dutch, who are among the strongest backers of the Rio conference, to help scuttle a near-agreement on an issue of this importance created some consternation. But some of the parties feel that, having come so close in New York, they will succeed in Rio.

As differences between Washington and the E.C. sharpened over the winter and the early spring, some diplomats guessed that a key figure in Rio would be Germany's Chancellor, Helmut Kohl. On July 7th, Kohl will serve as host for a meeting of the G-7 countries—the so-called economic summit—in Munich. The agenda will be

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troublesome: each of the seven economies is in some distress, and each leader fears that measures taken by various colleagues will further complicate his own difficulties. Kohl, like any leader, wants to run a successful summit—or one that is seen to be as successful as it could be under harsh circumstances. What he wouldn't want, the diplomats pointed out, was the wreckage of the Rio conference as an added complication in Munich. Thus, it appeared that Kohl, as leader of the strongest E.C. country, would push very hard to make a success of Rio. But now, on the eve of the conference, Kohl is beleaguered at home, his political position gravely weakened. Just how Germany's serious internal stresses will affect the outcome in Rio is one of the many uncertainties clouding the conference. Another is the fate of the trade talks—five years of negotiations aimed at sustaining and strengthening the world-trade system. On May 1st, Washington threatened the E.C. with penalty duties worth about a billion dollars, in retaliation for some European trade moves. Administration officials say that in the year ahead they expect to have bigger problems with Europe than with Japan. Trade and the environment are linked. "The trading system is the method by which we all do our business," Maurice Strong observes. "It can transfer its problems and its costs to the environment." He and others worry that a failure of the trade talks would lead to protectionism and other inward-looking steps aimed at sheltering vulnerable economies. If so, the currently fashionable preoccupation with the global environment would fade quickly.

THE leader and spokesman of the G-77 is Jamsheed Marker, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations and another well-respected, richly experienced figure. Marker worries that environmental issues, unless they are properly resolved, will deal what he calls "a devastating blow to the nation-state," which, he notes, is a device of fairly recent origin.

As might be expected of so large and diffuse a group, the G-77 lacks coherence. Still, it did manage to coördinate some positions during the PrepCom, and, more important, to join the rich countries in accepting UNCED's first principle—sustainable development. The term is understood to mean that economic growth will be lasting in today's polluted world only if it is environmentally benign. "The G-77 countries have accepted that the planet is indivisible," Marker says. "A problem created by one country or region will impact elsewhere."

Malaysia has been the G-77's premier hard-liner (along with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other big oil-producing states, which strongly oppose limits on CO_2 emissions). Brazil is closely watched because it is a major regional power, possesses a vital rain forest, and is host to the conference. China provokes the most discussion and speculation, because of its size, its goals, and its potential as supreme spoiler of the global environment. India, too, is closely watched, but its attitudes are somewhat ambiguous. "It is hard to know what the Indians want or would settle for," one senior figure says. The Indians talk a good deal about the Raj, and like to blame the rich in general for depleting their forests—an exploit actually of their own making.

Brazil, of course, has been under heavy world pressure to halt the depletion of its rain forest. Brazilians feel victimized—ganged up on by a world that singled out their rain forest for special attention and used it to obscure major environmental problems elsewhere. Brazil's government sought to become the venue for the conference in order to offset the widespread impression of its fecklessness. But the pressure has induced caution. Brazil did not take an active part in the PrepCom, and, indeed, was criticized for being ultra-cautious and unwilling to compromise. Troubles within its government haven't helped. On March 30th, half the Cabinet resigned amid charges of corruption and influence peddling. A dynamic but politically volatile and inept environmental minister was fired shortly before that. Everywhere there is apprehension about the Brazilian arrangements for the conference. "Can they pull it off?" one ministerial attendee asked. "They have too few hotels. They expect as many as forty thousand people, and are unwilling even now to talk about how they will handle them all. Their officials say privately, 'We are terrified.' There is raw sewage pouring onto the beaches. Crime is off the charts. Taxi-drivers in Rio don't stop for red lights at night for fear of being attacked."

I asked an official in Washington what the Brazilians were pushing for. "Three things," he said. "Agenda 21—

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China's leadership is solemnly committed to doubling the country's gross national product in twelve years at most. But unless an effort on this scale is coördinated with strict anti-pollution measures its impact on the global environment will be unprecedented. China has reserves of soft coal which dwarf the coalfields in America or anywhere else. If this resource should be exploited indifferently, it would increase the emission of greenhouse gases many times over, some experts say. Right now, China is considered the least energy-efficient country in the world—that is, of those countries that matter greatly. Its government is known to be very concerned about greenhouse-gas emissions. It also worries about population growth, declining tree cover, contamination of land and water, soil erosion, and the shrinkage of land under cultivation. China's leaders want to be sensible about the environment. In Washington, where the strain in Sino-American relations is apparent, China's only close tie right now is with the E.P.A. (The State Department tells the E.P.A., in effect, to please hang in there.) "The question is whether they can have it both ways," says Robert Fri, of Resources for the Future. "Their private sector is rampaging and out of control."

China is a huge market for the Japanese, but the Japanese are exercising some caution. One of two senior Japanese figures with whom I discussed China said, "We will help China try to double its G.N.P., but only in a way that meets environmentally correct criteria." (Japan is building a pollution-control center in China, as it is in Thailand and Indonesia.) And he added, "Without Chinese participation, as well as American, the Rio conference is meaningless."

"We argue with the Chinese, who say they can never have CO_2 limits," his colleague said. "They are using old technologies. We tell them to use new technologies. We are providing a lot of aid—about eight billion dollars in the last six years. They must shift their priorities from traditional development to sustainable development. They say it is too expensive. But we will provide soft loans for that purpose." These loans can be repaid in non-convertible currency. "We are more optimistic than pessimistic, even though what they say does not provide encouragement." These Japanese seemed to be saying, "Watch what the Chinese do, not what they say."

OVER the past few weeks, key governments have kept a fine fuzz over their intentions in Rio, thereby creating suspense and uncertainty rather than a sense of purpose or direction. People have been wondering whether the E.C. would corporately give up its leadership role and align itself with Washington across the board. Or might the Bush Administration agree to meet the other parties halfway, or even partway, on some of the major agenda items? Would Bush even turn up in Rio, and, if he did, would he stay for a while and take part or merely make a brief appearance? How much money, not to mention how much control over it, would the G-77 countries require in return for obliging the environmentally conscious North? Last, and perhaps most significant, just how large an initiative would Japan's leadership take in Rio? Did Japan intend, in effect, to take charge of the global-environment movement?

The conference needs to find leadership somewhere. "We cannot do it without the U.S.," Strong said at one point. Asked then if the United States had to lead, he said, "The U.S. doesn't have to be out in front. The E.C. can lead. And it has. But if the U.S. cannot lead, it still has an inherent veto over what happens."

By early May, hopes for a revival of the advanced E.C. position had largely faded. "I do not foresee a clash between us and the Americans at Rio," an E.C. ambassador said—rather gloomily, it seemed. Europe's retreat caused a fair amount of bitterness among diplomats from various G-77 countries who had worked hard at being helpful. But their anger was directed mainly against the Americans. "If Rio is judged a failure, no one will be shy about whom to blame," a worried Administration official said.

Aside from the exact shape of Japan's design, the greatest speculation centered for a time on whether Bush would attend the conference. At first, he worried that his going to Rio would allow Democrats to renew their criticism of his foreign travels and alleged inattention to domestic affairs. But the Democrats who were running for

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President in the early primaries urged him to go to Rio. There was, first, the apparent importance of the occasion. And virtually every other world and regional leader would be there. Still, the Administration's isolation on the key issues posed the risk that Bush, if he did go, would be in the direct line of fire. Also, he was acutely conscious of the strenuous opposition of some very big constituencies in some very big states—notably the big oil companies in Texas and California—to even a hint of CO_2 limits.

"The White House is tormented by the decision of whether Bush should or should not go," a well-informed European diplomat said. "His advisers don't want him to be pilloried by other countries if he goes. So the idea until now has been to send him if the outcome looks good from the Administration point of view, and not to send him if it doesn't. But now some of them think he should go in either case. If they don't like what is going on there, Bush will make a brave and defiant speech explaining why he wouldn't commit Americans to something that will cost them jobs and do other injury. If it goes all right there, Bush makes a different speech."

Better to go than not to go, even if the outcome looks bad, was the feeling of some members of the Administration. To take part in an anticlimactic meeting would mean accepting some of the blame for the outcome. But not to be there—to play sulky absentee—could mean being saddled with a larger portion of the blame. "He has to delay the decision, because it's his hole card—his only high card," explained one Administration official, who never considered not going a serious option.

The announcement that Bush would go was at last made on May 12th, in a Rose Garden ceremony that included Maurice Strong and the U.N. Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. But by delaying his decision as long as he did Bush may have maneuvered himself into a no-win situation politically. The right wing of his party had time to work up a full-throated cry against the Rio conference, and to express unhappiness about his even showing up there. But the environmental lobby in California—politically the most important state—is very strong.

On May 4th, Bush met with Stephan Schmidheiny, a forty-five-year-old Swiss billionaire, who owns Leica and is a major shareholder in other large companies, and sits on various boards of directors. Schmidheiny is one of Europe's most respected businessmen; a year or so ago, he was asked by Strong to help create and to be chairman of the Business Council for Sustainable Development. The council now has close to fifty members, a collection of luminaries from the business communities of America, Europe, and Japan. The Americans include the chairmen or chief executives of ALCOA, Du Pont, 3M, and even a big oil company—the Chevron Corporation. (The European list includes the Royal Dutch/Shell group.) On May 6th, two days after the meeting between Bush and Schmidheiny, the council released a lengthy report that recommended more efficient use of fossil fuels and other resources, "changes in life styles toward more sustainable forms of consumption," and also "new forms of coöperation between government, business, and society" to achieve these and other goals. "Economic growth and environmental protection are inextricably linked," the report declared. "The bottom line," it said, "is that the human species is living more off the planet's capital and less off the interest. This is bad business." For the American business community, or some influential segment of it, to get out ahead of the political leadership on issues of global importance is probably without precedent. An American who has worked with Schmidheiny says, "If you close your eyes it's hard to imagine you're not talking to an environmental buff instead of the C.E.O. of a big company."

In his meeting with Bush, Schmidheiny outlined the findings of the report, explaining in some detail why pollution control is good for business. The President listened attentively but didn't ask questions. "This is a story that needs to get out," a White House official said of the council's report just after the meeting.

Shortly before conferees began leaving for Rio, another White House official spelled out the so-called break points in the Administration's position. One of them was targets and timetables on the climate-control issue:

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they were strictly out. Another was the issue of broadening the governance of the Global Environment Facility: the United States would oppose any broadening of its governance. An American diplomat who has been involved in the preparations for Rio says, "My prediction is that in the end we will make a few marginal concessions, and all concerned will agree to let the thing muddle through to some vaguely acceptable outcome."

The pivotal question is whether that sort of outcome will satisfy the Japanese, who fully subscribe to the conclusions reached by the Schmidheiny group. During the PrepCom, no one could see where the Japanese were headed. "Japan is very erratic," one prominent Third World ambassador said. "It follows the G-77 some of the time, and then it switches back to the U.S. position." A few weeks later, however, this diplomat said, "Japan was a lot more supportive at the end of the PrepCom, and the E.C. countries were less supportive."

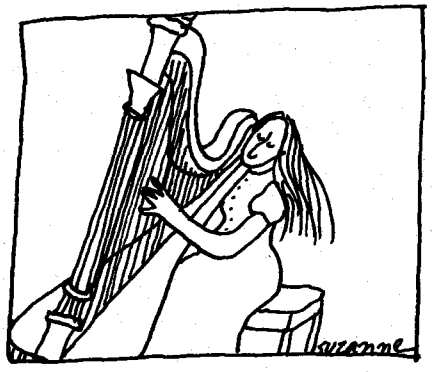
Maurice Strong, Tommy Koh, and various patrons of the Rio conference worried that ultra-conservative elements in Japan's bureaucracy were holding back the leadership. There were other concerns: last year, financial scandals implicated leaders of the Liberal Democratic Party, Japan's dominant party, and preëmpted much of their time and attention; the more recent economic troubles raised questions about whether Japan could afford to take a major initiative in Rio. More serious, actually, was the growing hesitation of the Foreign Ministry, where much of the push for a major political initiative had originated. In recent months, Tokyo has felt itself sandwiched between Washington and the developing countries—between not wanting to offend Bush in an election year and wanting to score heavily in the Third World. Rio began to look like a mug's game to some Japanese diplomats; their government could put up a lot of money there only to be landed on by Japan-bashers in Washington. This attitude wasn't confined to the Foreign Ministry; indeed, it was infectious. Bureaucrats in the more powerful Ministry of Finance had never been converted to the notion of a bold foreign-policy initiative that would cost a lot of money, especially at a time when Japan was under pressure to contribute more than its share to various U.N. peacekeeping operations. And at the popular level this sort of policy reeked of checkbook diplomacy.

Within both government and business circles in Japan, there has been doubt and uncertainty about how to exploit the nation's lead in environmental technology. "We are talking billions of dollars," a Japanese businessman said to me recently. "We must do it sensibly and share the profits with others in joint ventures. Otherwise, we will be seen as the Venetian merchants of the twenty-first century. Americans already see us as too mercantilist. This is a profoundly difficult question for us. MITI is showing its typical competitiveness."

In the effort to sort out a position, the Japanese tried to coöpt Washington. "They don't like being out there alone," Robert Fri says. "They made overtures here on their New Earth 21 plan." What happened, an Administration official says, was that Japan said, in effect, "We think you Americans should lead on climate change and move it forward. We are confident that Japan can move the technology forward." This approach, according to the official, did not sit well with the people around Bush.

Japan's aversion to "being out there alone" reflects its concern about being seen as using its advantage in environmental technology and know-how to create, or to help create, a sphere of influence. In Thailand last fall, Japan announced a Green Aid Policy. The idea is to show countries what they require in the way of environmental assistance, and then to finance the assistance through so-called tied aid—financial aid that is available only for the purchase of Japanese products.

Just over a year ago, former Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita, a baronial figure who controls one of the Liberal Democratic Party's two major factions, publicly proposed that Japan commit funds to UNCED that matched its contribution to the Gulf War—about thirteen billion dollars. Japanese leaders rarely make unambiguous recommendations of this sort—not before a support structure is in place. Takeshita's statement drew a large response nationwide. The bureaucracy's instant case of nerves was shared by the media, which worried aloud about Japan's proneness to give away money without first thinking through the substance of issues.



Around this time, Strong asked Takeshita to help him build support for the Rio conference. The upshot was a conference held in Tokyo from April 15th to 17th. It was frankly aimed at collecting heavyweight figures from all parts of the world, and was actually called the Eminent Persons Conference. Jimmy Carter was there for the United States. Other notables included Oscar Arias Sánchez, Costa Rica's former President and a Nobel laureate; Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's father figure and longtime former ruler; and Raymond Barre, a former Prime Minister of France.

In Tokyo, the meeting was seen by its sponsors as a way of gaining public acceptance for the initiative in Rio that some of them had been treating, or pretending to treat, as a fait accompli. The big problem, it seemed, was still the cadres of jittery influential bureaucrats. "Careful bureaucrats can manipulate the politicians, who need them to make things happen," said one Japanese who attended the meeting. "One-third of the Diet consists of former bureaucrats."

Takeshita countered the bureaucrats in part by having a protégé, Ryutaro Hashimoto, take charge of the planning and management of Japan's pre-Rio tactics. This was serious politics. Hashimoto and Ichiro Ozawa, a dynamic Liberal Democratic leader, are rivals. They are in their middle years, and are expected to be the leaders of the future. One or the other of them will probably be the next Prime Minister. Hashimoto was among those caught up in last year's financial scandals, and Ozawa is believed to have the lead. But Hashimoto now controls a surpassingly important issue. He and Takeshita are former Ministry of Finance officials and are said to have

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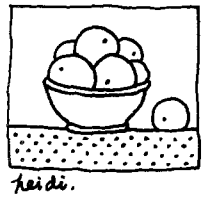
enduring links with people there who can help them. They can also count on quiet support from the Keidanren, the business council, which continues to see "green business" as being of great importance. If Japan does take a bold step in Rio and does acquire the aura of leadership, Hashimoto could regain the edge politically. In short, the stakes are very high.

The Eminent Persons Conference was a major event in Japan. During the preceding week, it made page-one news each day and was discussed on all the morning and evening television and radio news shows. Many of the stories were leaked by ministries with different slants on the conference. Just before the meeting began, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa stated publicly that his government strongly supported a global environment initiative. "Great importance was attached to this," a Japanese who was there said. And, he added, Takeshita and Toshiki Kaifu, another former Prime Minister, were present for all of it. "That had symbolic importance and wasn't lost on the major groups in Japan."



Much of the talk ahead of time had centered on whether the government would use the Tokyo meeting as a forum for disclosing a multibillion-dollar Japanese commitment to UNCED. That didn't happen; to have made such an announcement at a moment when the country was hearing nothing but bad news about the economy could have invited a great deal of jumping up and down about checkbook diplomacy. Still, insiders felt that the affair had gone well—better, even, than might have been expected. First, Miyazawa announced that a special session of the Diet would be convened after the Rio conference. There is no precedent, I'm told, for holding a special session on a topic like the environment. The purpose of the session will be to adopt legislation for financing whatever Japan commits itself to doing. According to a Japanese acquaintance who attended the meeting, Japan is likely to contribute twenty to twenty-five per cent of the developed world's share of new financial aid. Japan's normal share in these matters, he points out, is fifteen per cent; the additional ten per cent, he says, is judged to be the cost of establishing Japan as UNCED's leader.

Questions remained. Would all the brave talk be borne out by events in Rio? Or would Japan at the end of the day go along with America's preference for an unresounding outcome? One American official suspects that Washington may have "turned off the Japanese" by letting on that a truly big commitment from them could embarrass the Administration. Asked about this, another closely involved American official noted, first, that if Japan wanted to make a major move in Rio it would do so whatever Washington might let on; second, that United States policy is to push for steadily larger Japanese participation in various burden-sharing projects. This official did concede, however, that unless Bush arrives in Rio with an initiative of his own, the United States may find itself in an awkward position.

The White House has devised an initiative of sorts; it involves various ways of protecting the rain forests from further ravages, but no two officials describe it in the same way. The idea actually didn't surface until mid-May, and the decision then was to take it up with Germany, because Chancellor Kohl's government is committed to doing something about forests. Also, as a White House official put it, "we need the Germans on board so that we can get our own act together within the U.S. government." And one key Administration official said during the third week of May, "We can't be in a position of raising expectations without knowing if we can meet them. And," he asked rhetorically, "is this a bilateral or a multilateral initiative?" Quite clearly, it began life as strictly a Bush initiative, but the major funding would have to be provided by Germany and the other G-7 countries. The White House appears to be at daggers drawn on this and other UNCED issues with various agencies of the government. The talk between the contesting parties is shrill, the situation all but chaotic. The only certainty about the Bush initiative is that it came along too late to be acted on in Rio.

The problem of diminishing forests is more acute and pressing than that of global warming, and so is the related issue of biodiversity. On the eve of the conference, few ventured to predict what would become of either

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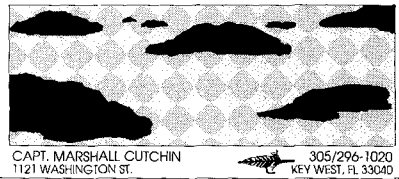

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issue in Rio. A major row had erupted over a proposed biodiversity convention. Among various points of contention, one was especially difficult because, like global warming, it pitted the United States against just about everyone else, including the Europeans and Japan. The dispute involved an overlap between biodiversity and commercial biotechnology, a business that Americans are pursuing more aggressively than most and that the Bush Administration wishes to shield from outside interference. But, according to the G-77 countries, foreign companies that operate in their forests must conform to national environmental laws, including those that protect plant and animal species. These countries further insist that such companies compensate their hosts for genetic material removed for commercial use. Washington would like to separate the two topics, and Dan Quayle dispatched a member of his staff to Nairobi, where the convention is being negotiated, to object even to the use of the term biotechnology in the talks. The United States Navy has also weighed in, expressing concern about language intended to protect ocean species which might interfere with fleet operations.

Not long ago, I asked a senior Japanese diplomat how his leadership would handle the issue of climate control in Rio. He answered a different question: "If the U.S. cannot commit itself to stabilize CO_2 emissions, then developing countries like China, India, Brazil, and Mexico won't make commitments, either," he said. "We need a strong CO_2 convention—one with teeth in it." But it was probably never in the cards that Japan really would take on Washington by insisting on such a document. Still, the climate treaty that most parties will probably initial in Rio, although nonbinding, does contain a moral commitment that is stronger than the White House would have liked; it may even improve chances to make progress on one or two other issues. The declaration of principles agreed to in New York may stand up as a strong and defensible charter. And many of the developing countries now expect to see their need for a quid pro quo in Rio more or less satisfied.

ON February 27th, this country's National Academy of Sciences and Britain's Royal Society issued their first joint statement in the hundred and twenty-nine years that both have existed. One stark passage reads, "If current predictions of population growth prove accurate and patterns of human activity on the planet remain unchanged, science and technology may not be able to prevent either irreversible degradation of the environment or continued poverty for much of the world."

The Congress of Vienna, convened in 1814, created a stable post-Napoleonic Europe. A century later, the meeting at Versailles aimed as high, though wide of the mark. And, even before the Second World War ended, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, together with people like John Maynard Keynes and Jean Monnet, were designing what they hoped would be a stable world order. No such sense of large purpose is likely to distinguish the meeting in Rio, although its import may be as historic. But it will probably be remembered as more than a quiet failure masquerading as a success—a somewhat better outcome, or beginning, than had seemed possible during the PrepCom.

America, Europe, and Japan are groping for a redefinition of roles in the post-Cold War era. Actually, Japan hasn't had a role and requires one. Europe is uncertain of its new role, because it hasn't yet defined itself. America continues to possess the wherewithal for solving yesterday's problems, but lacks the resources and, many diplomats would say, the rigor and the coherence for dealing with the problems of today and tomorrow. All of which suggests, among other things, that only when green politics begins to cost eminent people high political office will the issue of the global environment be dealt with aggressively. —JOHN NEWHOUSE

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THE THEATRE

Going Nowhere

THE end-of-season news from the Manhattan Theatre Club is that while Richard Greenberg's new play, "The Extra Man," is not quite as contemptible as "Eastern Standard," his last play but one at the M.T.C., it is every bit as arch, smug, and inept as "The American Plan," his last play, which the company also produced. As usual, the M.T.C. has done very well by Mr. Greenberg; "The Extra Man" (which Michael Engler directed) has elegant costumes (by Jess Goldstein), and sophisticated sets (by Loy Arcenas) that wheel and bump, and ferry actors to no place in particular—which is where the play is going. And, as usual, Mr. Greenberg has been given a first-rate cast: in this case, Adam Arkin, Boyd Gaines, Laila Robins, and John Slattery.

Unfortunately, the new play does nothing to offset one's impression that Mr. Greenberg's experience of life is confined to parties, chic restaurants, and the New York literary scene. A fiction writer named Keith (Mr. Gaines), a film critic named Jess (Mr. Arkin), and a married book editor named Laura (Miss Robins) discuss their lives, their feelings, and their relationships, and say such moving things to each other as "You're so unhappy!" and such witty things of themselves as "Essentially, I'm agnostic, but I believe in the god of cheap irony." The play has two party scenes, four restaurant scenes, and three scenes set in empty apartments—not because any of the characters in the play are planning to move in the near future but because the two writers and the editor have so much time on their hands that looking at apartments is just something they do. There is one character in the play with a real job—Laura's neglectful lawyer husband, Daniel (Mr. Slattery)—but Mr. Greenberg seems confused about what sort of lawyer he is. The way everyone goes on about him—Daniel "*does* something," he "does *good things*"—you assume that he's a First Amendment lawyer or a civil-rights lawyer or a high-profile attorney like F. Lee Bailey or Alan Dershowitz, but he turns out to be just an ambulance chaser. In Act I, he's working on some sort of class-action suit involving dead babies (this gets a lot of laughs), and in Act II his client is suing the Army because of an explosion that blew off his nose fifty years ago. (Mr. Greenberg might want to check on that: Can you really sue the Army for such a thing? And isn't there a statute of limitations?)

When it comes to book editors and what they do, Mr. Greenberg doesn't seem any clearer or any better informed. In this play, for instance—which is about Mr. Gaines tricking Miss Robins into being unfaithful with Mr. Arkin, so that Mr. Gaines will have something to write a novel about—he has Miss Robins, at one of those parties, offer to publish a collection of Mr. Arkin's film criticism, even though she has never read any of it. At their subsequent business luncheon, moreover, he has her appropriate Mr. Gaines' observation that Mr. Arkin is the best film critic since James Agee. When Mr. Arkin objects that his work is nothing like Agee's, she admits that she has never read any of Agee's film criticism, either, and says, "You must think me a complete dodo as an editor."

I don't know whether anyone who had undertaken to publish a volume of film criticism would admit to having never read Agee, but I'm pretty sure that no woman with a career in book publishing would ever say, "You must think me a complete dodo as an editor." Perhaps Mr. Greenberg gets his ideas about how working men and women behave in the real world from his experiences writing commissioned plays for subsidized theatres. But surely Lynne Meadow, the artistic director of the Manhattan Theatre Club, doesn't talk and behave and think like Laura!

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

MAY 21

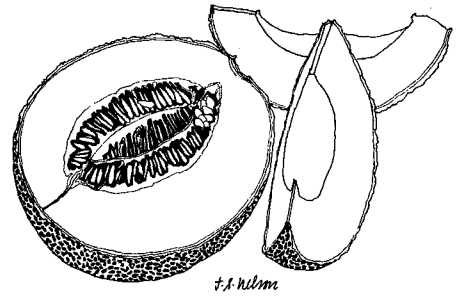
As the worst riots in modern American history broke out, and spread, the probable candidates of the two major parties proceeded to make careful political calculations. George Bush and Bill Clinton were working with the same equation; this explains much of their behavior in the days following the riots. The probable independent candidate, Ross Perot, had little to say. The riots threw both Bush and Clinton off stride, raising subjects they had largely been avoiding, and threatening the coalitions they were painstakingly trying to put together. Both men have been going after the same constituency, which they consider crucial to victory—the independent, "swing" voters, many of them "Reagan Democrats." Neither candidate had been campaigning on the need to change conditions in our inner cities, but Clinton, at least, was stressing some of the relevant problems—in particular, the need for better education and training. He has a thirty-four-point urban plan, even if he didn't talk about it much, and he had been calling for racial harmony (a worthy though not very risky thing to do).

At the same time, especially in view of the threat posed by Ross Perot, Bush has to keep his conservative base, and Clinton has to be sure he has the votes of blacks and strong liberals, but both men also need the votes of others. In fact, one of the unspoken but widely understood purposes behind the founding, in 1985, of the Democratic Leadership Council, in which Clinton was a major figure, was to get away from the Democratic Party's close identification with blacks, which many considered a big factor in the Party's continual loss of the Presidency; the way this was put publicly was that the purpose was to guide the Party toward "the center." The political and intellectual underpinning of Clinton's campaign has been the need to recapture what it calls "the forgotten middle class." Further, the Democrats had long been attacked, and made vulnerable, for being "soft" on law and order. The fact that, for the first time, more voters live in the suburbs than in the cities had also led to the further demotion of urban issues.

The cities had left us alone, and so we returned the favor; by and large, policymakers felt that they could be ignored with impunity. Senator Bill Bradley, a lone voice here in the past year on the subject of race, said recently, "There is a kind of avoidance going on here, avoidance of the cost of neglect of the last twenty-five years." After the riots broke out, both candidates calibrated the extent to which they should demonstrate concern for those who live in the inner cities versus coming down strongly for law and order. Neither man seemed to act out of instinct, other than an instinct for caution. A working assumption—shared by much of the press—was that too much attention to the inner-city residents, too much talk about "root causes" behind the rioting, not to mention insufficient condemnation of the violence, would lead to a white "backlash." Republicans had been courting backlashers for years; Democrats didn't want to incur their enmity once again. And then there is the fact that the President's lack of interest in domestic issues had become both a substantive and a political liability. These factors, then, formed the political maze that Bush and Clinton had to make their way through once the Los Angeles riots began.

IN the course of his 1988 campaign, Bush said, suddenly, "I find myself almost haunted . . . by the lives being lived by the children of our inner cities." But in this year's State of the Union Message the President as much as admitted that he didn't have a real urban agenda when he proposed a Presidential commission on urban families. Bush had proposed some programs for inner cities but hadn't pushed them, and his proposals were on the whole marginal.

So, when Los Angeles blew, on Wednesday, April 29th, Bush's variable statements and actions, plus the background chatter of his advisers, amounted to billboards advertising his political dilemma. When the Rodney King verdict came down, Bush's first instinct was to tell a shocked nation, by responding to a reporter's question as he left a state dinner, "The court system has worked," and he appealed for calm. (By this time, Los Angeles was in flames.) In 1988, Bush successfully courted police organizations in his quest for the Presidency; among the police officials who backed him was the now disgraced Los Angeles police chief, Daryl Gates. (Gates made an ad for Bush.) In fact, even after the infamous videotape of King's beating was aired, Bush had called Gates "an American hero." The day after the riots began, Bush made three different statements, in one of them declaring his "deep sense of personal frustration and anguish" over the King case, but in the next two making no such personal statement and increasingly condemning the violence. His Oval Office speech on Friday night was a pretty good one as Bush speeches go, carefully balanced between saying he had been "stunned" by the verdict and calling for law and order. But it didn't take us anywhere. His announcement that he had (that morning) dispatched federal troops to Los Angeles put him—belatedly—in his favored Commander-in-Chief role. Afterward, there were newspaper stories about the struggle between factions of Presidential advisers over how "tough" and how "compassionate" the speech should be—as if the President was a bystander.



In the continuing internal arguments over whether the President should offer aid in the wake of the riots, some of his White House and campaign advisers argued that this subject wasn't the President's "turf," and cautioned against getting into a bidding war with the Democrats. There were newspaper stories about aides' advising the President that he had to look as if he cared about conditions in the inner cities and was in danger of seeming too passive. There was debate over how "programmatic" the President's response should be, with some advisers arguing, circularly, that anything very expansive would draw attention to the fact that Bush didn't have much of a program. Some advisers argued that he should instead stress family values, which is considered Republican territory. Fear that the Democrats might profit from the President's inattention to this subject led to Press Secretary

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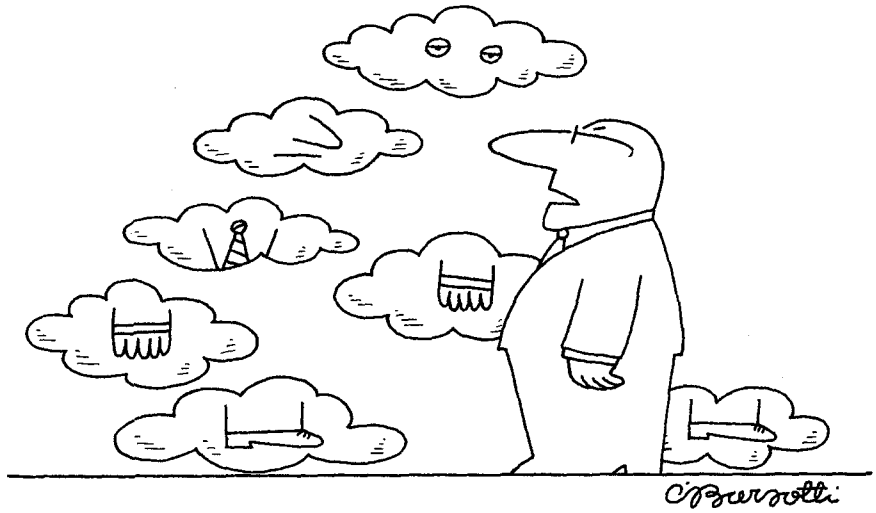
Marlin Fitzwater's referring to Clinton as "Slippery Bill" after Clinton criticized the Administration's lack of attention to urban areas—and inspired Fitzwater's statement suggesting that the Great Society was to blame for the riots. It was widely assumed that Fitzwater was carrying out instructions.

Fitzwater's statement seemed to many to be a bone thrown to Bush's conservative base, but officials said later that its purpose was to preëmpt the Democrats' calling for more spending for the cities. The President's advisers didn't expect the statement to backfire as it did, and later claimed that Fitzwater had misspoken. Fitzwater very rarely misspeaks. The statement suggested that the Administration had nothing else to say, and it was obviously silly to place the blame on policy decisions that had been made a long time before—as if there had been no Republican Administrations in the past twelve years—and neither Fitzwater nor other officials could answer the question of what specific programs Fitzwater was referring to. Some officials, and particularly Vice-President Dan Quayle, pointed to the welfare program, but that had come out of the New Deal, and reforms passed in 1988 to help people get training and jobs and get off welfare have been underfunded and barely put into practice. Welfare, a frequent target of Republican candidates, and one that registers strongly with focus groups, represents only one per cent of the federal budget. Quayle, protecting his conservative base—an alliance that is meant to put Bush in need of Quayle, as well as consolidate Quayle's own support for 1996 (though a Republican officeholder who knows Bush thinks Quayle might still be dumped if Bush is desperate enough)—also came to the defense of the Los Angeles Police Department, which pulled out of South Central Los Angeles when the rioting broke out. And this week he pursued his conservative li[illegible] by arguing that the riots had been caused by "a poverty of values"—and set off the "Murphy Brown" hullabaloo, and the ensuing debate over "family values." However costly Quayle's criticism of the decision by Candice Bergen's television character to have a child out of wedlock might have been among hip yuppies who watch the popular show (the President himself shrank from criticizing it), and however irrelevant it was to the riots, Quayle got the argument onto ground the Republicans feel more comfortable with than they do with the cities. His position—and he had something of a point—went over very well with the Republican base.



"I'd like to remind you again, Winfield, that daydreaming is only a part of the creative process."

• •

Bush said that Fitzwater's comment about Johnson-era programs had been "grossly misinterpreted," and denied that he himself was casting blame. But Bush did repeat a statement that he had made before: that the Great Society hadn't worked, and he added that he had been "vindicated." In fact, some of the Great Society programs did work—and have been continued to this day. Among them are Head Start (which has never been fully funded), the Job Corps, Medicare, Medicaid, aid to schools with predominantly poor kids. Joseph Califano, Lyndon Johnson's Special Assistant for Domestic Affairs, says that the Great Society programs cut poverty in half between 1963, when Johnson became President, and the early seventies, when the programs were at their peak, but that in the last twelve years the poverty rate went back to what it had been before the programs were enacted. When Administration officials talk about how much money has been spent on social programs—about three trillion dollars since 1965—and then argue that the programs obviously haven't worked (viz. Los Angeles), they are lumping together programs, such as Medicare, food stamps, and welfare, that were never specifically aimed at inner cities or, as in the case of welfare, weren't Great Society programs. Some programs were eliminated, or their funds were cut deeply, before there was a chance to see if they worked. As it happens, one goal of the Great Society anti-poverty program was something that the Bush people seem to think they invented and is now all the rage—"empowerment." But the Great Society's goal was to give the poor political empowerment; neither the big-city mayors nor the Republicans liked this idea, and it was slowly strangled. When the Bush theoreticians talk about empowerment, they have in mind letting people own their homes and in various ways take away decisions from the bureaucracy. (This is the "New Paradigm," to which Clinton also subscribes.) Richard Nixon not only kept some Great Society programs going but also spent more money on them. In the course of the Reagan and Bush Administrations, spending for the major urban programs was cut by two-thirds.

As the Los Angeles riots, and the internal debate about what the President's response should be, continued, the realization grew that here was another moment at which the President could appear to be in charge; it was—what luck!—another Desert Storm. Finally, those who argued that the President should at least appear to be offering a program for the cities won out—but only up to a point. The President's "proposals," offered in Los Angeles, were, as he conceded, repeats of ones he had already made. Two of them had been pushed by Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp, and now Kemp, the black sheep

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in the Cabinet, was in a starring role—but that didn't make him any more popular with other high Administration officials, who had felt for some time that Kemp had been too outspoken and slightly disloyal. In other Administrations, someone who behaved like Kemp would have been fired, but Kemp, a once and probably future Presidential candidate, has his own constituency—activist conservatives—and firing him was at least as dangerous as keeping him in the fold. I am reliably told that Secretary of State James Baker, Bush's close friend and adviser, had urged that Kemp be fired.

Kemp is an enthusiast, a nice and somewhat boyish man, and he had become as enthused about his urban programs as he had once been about returning to the gold standard. His two programs—to give businesses tax incentives to invest in "enterprise zones," and a program called HOPE that is intended to help public-housing tenants buy their own units—would have limited effect. A large number of states have created enterprise zones, with only marginal results, and federal tax breaks might not persuade businesses to locate in areas that are crime-ridden and have few skilled workers. Also, if a company simply relocates from one poor area into another, nothing is gained. Some think that Kemp's and others' enthusiasm for enterprise zones is driven in large part by the fact that the program would eliminate capital-gains taxes for those who invest in the designated areas—but there is a question whether the promise of no capital gains when an investor sells his business is enough to lure him into such an area. The HOPE program is very expensive—according to government numbers, it costs between seventy thousand and a hundred thousand dollars per poor family, enough to buy a nice house—and it continues dependency. (The government buys the unit for a tenant association, but the occupant is likely to be on welfare, and so the government also pays the rent, plus welfare.) It may also be wrongly premised: people who have worked on inner-city problems say that public-housing tenants want to get out of public housing, not buy "homes" there.

Recognizing the limits of tax incentives to lure businesses into inner cities, the Administration proposed a program (until now largely ignored) that, with its penchant for cute names, it calls Weed and Seed. The purpose is to reduce crime in a selected area by putting the bad elements in jail; beef up social services (some of them Great Society programs); and then try to lure businesses in through tax incentives. There are a lot of problems with this proposal, too, including the need for more jail cells and the fact that the "bad elements" would be back on the streets after not very long. The other programs the Administration is now pushing as help for the inner cities are its education "choice" proposal, to give parents vouchers to send their children to public or private (that's the controversial part) schools of their choice; welfare reform; and minor changes in existing job programs. The welfare "reform" is essentially a granting of federal waivers for state programs to tighten eligibility and get people off the rolls faster. This is the new rage in welfare reform. In talking about his proposal earlier this year, Bush said, "I think the politics drives some things. . . . They get much more clearly in focus every four years."

A White House official concedes that Bush's program was offered with an eye on his base, and he says that that's why the emphasis was on private enterprise, law and order, and home ownership. He said that the President came up with a figure of nineteen million dollars in Weed and Seed money for Los Angeles because nineteen sounds like a lot less than twenty. Even some Administration officials don't pretend that the President's program promises long-term help.

CLINTON's first responses to the violence were sotto-voce, and there were lengthy discussions within his camp—not unlike those in the Bush camp—over how he should respond. Clinton strongly criticized the King verdict right away, and then carefully balanced his statements between criticism of the verdict and condemnation of the violence. After Fitzwater struck at him ("Slippery Bill"), Clinton backed off and called for a national day of prayer. It wasn't until the Saturday after the riots began that Clinton gave a strong speech on the subject, to the D.L.C. But Clinton never soared (and talked a lot about programs), passing up an opportunity to catch the nation's attention on an important substantive matter, and to show—as he very much needed to—that he could be a leader.

The kind of thing the Clinton camp did consider is illustrative of several problems: at the suggestion of an outside strategist, it considered sending Clinton to the same spot in Indiana where, on April 4, 1968, Robert Kennedy, having learned upon landing for a campaign stop of the assassination of Martin Luther King, had given a very moving speech. According to Kennedy's aides, Kennedy resisted their suggestion that the planned rally be called off, and composed the speech on the way from the airport. Clinton likes to think of himself as the political descendant of Robert Kennedy, because of his bringing together in his coalition blacks and middle-class whites. But the idea of an ersatz event—planning and discussing how to emulate something that had been spontaneous—reveals instead the difference between those two men. In any event, after some discussion the idea was dropped. (A friend of mine posits that the capacity for instant communications among a sizable group of advisers has become a detriment to modern politics. Campaigns now routinely communicate air-to-ground and can hold conference calls on cellular phones. With that capacity, almost nothing happens without discussions among a group of people, and discussions are known to water down or impede ideas. The Clinton campaign spends a lot of time in conference calls.)

A Democratic strategist says, "When you have a 'character' problem, there may be one or two exogenous events that you can catch onto if you're lucky." Clinton, in this view, missed a rare chance. Some in the Clinton camp agree. The evidence is that Clinton deliberately kept his response to the riots low-key, loath to stir up new controversy about himself or to offend a large group of voters, or to be seen as taking partisan advantage. He came across as calculating rather than committed, and largely disappeared from view. Clinton is a very smart man, but

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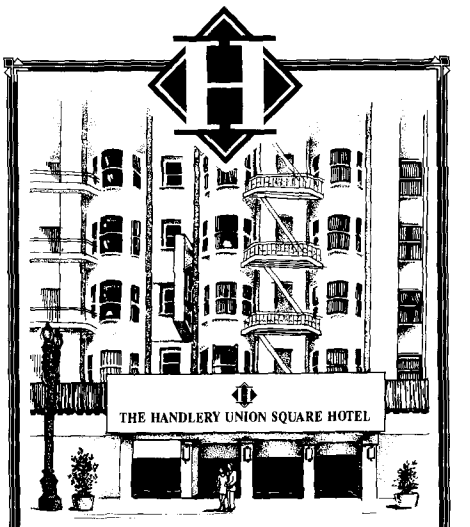
sometimes it seems that, like some other smart people, he thinks too much.

FOR a little while, it looked as if there would be bipartisan harmony on the President's program, but that was, of course, an illusion. The first impulse on both sides was that it is good politics to reach bipartisan agreement—or to appear to be trying to do so. The President had little choice but to continue to press for his program, and last week he made five appearances in inner cities. He was said by his aides to have been moved by what he saw in Los Angeles (where had he been?), but, whether or not Bush has a new, deep interest in the inner cities, he has to demonstrate that he can lead on this searing domestic problem. Given the public's frustration with Washington's "gridlock" (and the scandals plaguing the House of Representatives), both the President and Congress had to show that they could get something done. But the Democrats, pushed by their urban constituency, want a larger long-term urban plan than the President has proposed. Some members of Congress in both parties are offering far more ambitious plans than the President's: some of them propose resurrecting the New Deal ideas of a Civilian Conservation Corps and a Works Progress Administration, to provide youths and those on welfare with jobs rebuilding our infrastructure and other public-service work. (One of the President's campaign advisers had advocated, futilely, that the President propose such a program.) Negotiations between the White House and Congress are now under way.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, of New York, argues that the approaches being considered now don't get to the heart of the problem. "We're just painfully reviving old ideas," he says. Moynihan, who in the mid-sixties foresaw the pathology of the ghetto that is now upon us (and was excoriated by many blacks and liberals, who argued that he was blaming victims), says, "We're dealing with what is now a seriously dysfunctional sector of the population. We're dealing with a population of damaged people, and no one has learned anything about undoing the damage." He thinks that returning to W.P.A.- or C.C.C.-type programs isn't the answer (though he had sponsored a new C.C.C. program); he points out that the W.P.A. put to work adult males who had already held jobs. Pressed for what he would do, Moynihan, who has one of the most inventive minds in politics, says, "We need to find a way to socialize the young black ghetto children, ages zero to eight." He adds, "It's not one thing, it's a lot of things. The illegitimacy ratio in inner cities is eighty per cent. There were European models for our other social experiments. We don't have any model for this. This has never happened to a society before."

There remains, of course, the problem of how to pay for any new programs. A way can always be found, as it was for the S. & L. crisis, but giving more money to inner cities is another matter—though some polls have shown that a majority of people feel that the nation is spending too little on improving the condition of blacks. Eager to protect jobs in their constituencies, both the House and the Senate declined earlier this year to tear down the budgetary "wall" between spending for domestic purposes and spending for defense. (A majority of Democrats in both chambers voted to do so, and the subject will come back shortly.) At the same time, Congress is hot for passing a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget—another attempt to leave to fiat what it cannot itself do. As a nation, we've never had a very long attention span, especially on a domestic issue. The President's focus on the urban issue is beginning to dim.

So perhaps the Presidential adviser was right when he said to me last week that the issue of the inner cities would fade after a couple of weeks—though the White House would still be working on the President's program. He added, "The President has to do well right now, at a time of testing." But, referring to the group of swing voters Bush needs—lower-middle-class and middle-class people alienated from the way business is done in Washington and feeling pressed economically—the adviser said that these people wouldn't be won over by the President's dealing with the inner cities, that the source of their discontent lay elsewhere. "The cold-blooded political calculation," he said, "is that the current situation is helpful to the President. It allows him to be seen taking charge, explaining his agenda. But that's not going to make those people feel better about their issues." —ELIZABETH DREW



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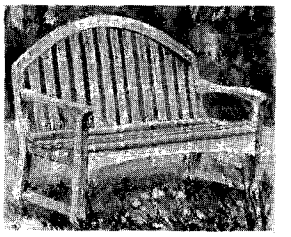

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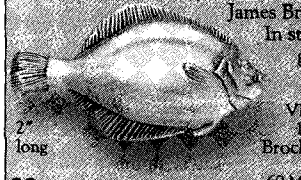

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BOOKS

Wild Life

"NATIVE AMERICAN TESTIMONY" (Viking; $25) is a compendium of documents which forms, as its subtitle says, "A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-1992." Peter Nabokov, who edited the book, calls it an "American Indian historical anthology." Historical anthologies often try to present the texts—the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution—that are vital for understanding the spirit of an age or the causes of a chain of events. But in any sober account of Indian-white relations all the vital texts fall on the white side of things. What Nabokov has given us is a collection of verbal artifacts from the Indian side—artifacts that read like depositions in a long-standing court case in which the plaintiffs have lost heart.

The most recent voice in this anthology belongs to the novelist N. Scott Momaday, who ruminates on the meaning of the Columbus quincentennial. The earliest voice comes from the record that Captain John Smith made in 1609 of a speech by Wahunsonacock, better known as King Powhatan, who upbraids the English settlers for their lack of friendliness. Between these two extremes Nabokov includes more than a hundred accounts of Indian-white relations, taken from a wide range of sources, some as familiar as "Black Elk Speaks," a perennial favorite of Native American literature, some filtered from the more recondite reaches of the United States National Archives. In the last couple of decades, there has been a boom in what might (polemically) be called polemical anthologies—collections of what we are now used to thinking of as "marginalized" literatures, among them women's writing, African-American writing, and Chicano writing. What distinguishes "Native American Testimony" from many of these volumes, which it superficially resembles, is Nabokov's editorial tact. The voices in this anthology are so strong, so clear, that any sermonizing by the editor—a natural temptation—would simply be redundant. Nabokov understands that there is no need to persuade the reader of the tragic shape of the story told in "Native American Testimony." Persuasion follows of itself.

Reading this book, I remembered something that parents used to say when their kids ran around in the house: "Stop acting like wild Indians." It is phrased a little differently in "Native American Testimony." The year is 1873. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs is addressing a group of Otoe chiefs who have travelled from Nebraska to Washington, D.C., to ask permission for a buffalo hunt and to inquire after money owed them for the sale of their lands. "We must do one thing or the other," Commissioner Edward P. Smith is saying. "Either let you continue wild as you now are, or make you like white men; and nothing keeps up this wild living like hunting." There was no either/or about it. The meeting between Commissioner Smith and the Otoe chiefs, like so many meetings between Indians and whites in the past, offered only a pretense of debate. The Otoes—Stand By, Big Bear, and Medicine Horse—were allowed to deliberate among themselves, but they were not allowed to affect the outcome of the meeting. In the Commissioner's arguments—hardly arguments, since they were not meant to convince—you can hear the suffocating logic of paternalism, which most readers will recognize from their childhoods. "You are my children, and I had a right to buy what I wanted to for you," Smith tells the Otoes. "It takes you a long time to find out that I am going to do what I think best for you."

Children give in to paternalism because they are children, after all, and will one day outgrow that condition. Indians, for their part, were somehow expected to mature into whites, yet Indians were not children, and they could not change color. It is a measure of their subjection that the Otoes felt they had to emphasize such obvious points. "We are not children. We are men," Medicine Horse tells the Commissioner on the second day of negotiations. Big Bear says, "You cannot make white men of us. That is one thing you can't do." But by their third day in Washington they have been forced to accept at least one aspect of the paternal analogy. "There is such a thing as children being whipped too often," Medicine Horse says. A year later, he led part of the Otoe tribe off their Nebraska reservation and into Kansas Territory. He was soon captured and imprisoned, like a wild Indian.

IT'S easy enough to dissect the idea of wildness, to expose the assumptions it musters. You might argue that one man's wildness is another man's self-determination, or that wildness is not an issue unless tameness is spreading, and it finally becomes apparent that the idea of wildness has been domesticated for political use. But the cruellest fact for North American Indians was this: among whites, they couldn't refute their wildness—it was a given, as plain as their red skin and their inability to write. No eloquence, no logic—and there are extraordinary examples of both in "Native American Testimony"—could undo the cultural arrogance of whites. In 1785, when commissioners came to sign a treaty with the Cherokee tribe, then living in Georgia, Corn Tassel rose to speak for his people, to speak for all Indians before the assumed superiority of the white man's way of living: "You say: Why do not the Indians till the ground and live as we do? May we not, with equal propriety, ask, Why the white people do not hunt and live as we do?" Logically, his argument is as convincing as that of the whites. But to whites the answer was self-evident: because that would be wild living. They had another, less principled answer, too: because we are more numerous than you are.

Civilization—in the conventional sense that is used to justify the dispossession of Native Americans—rests on its ability to project law. But law is culturally determined, and is closely tied up with the idea of property. From a European perspective, Indians didn't seem to have any real property or any law, and whites drew ambiguous conclusions from that apparent lack. Even Thomas Jefferson, who defended "the man of America" against Buffon's charge that the New World was popu-

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lated by degenerate species, found it odd that Indians governed themselves by a kind of moral coercion based only on manners and their innate sense of right and wrong. "Imperfect as this . . . may seem," he wrote in 1781, "crimes are very rare among them: insomuch that were it made a question, whether no law, as among the savage Americans, or too much law, as among the civilized Europeans, submits man to the greatest evil, one who has seen both conditions of existence would pronounce it to be the last: and that the sheep are happier of themselves, than under the care of the wolves." It's worth noticing who in Jefferson's metaphor are the wild ones.

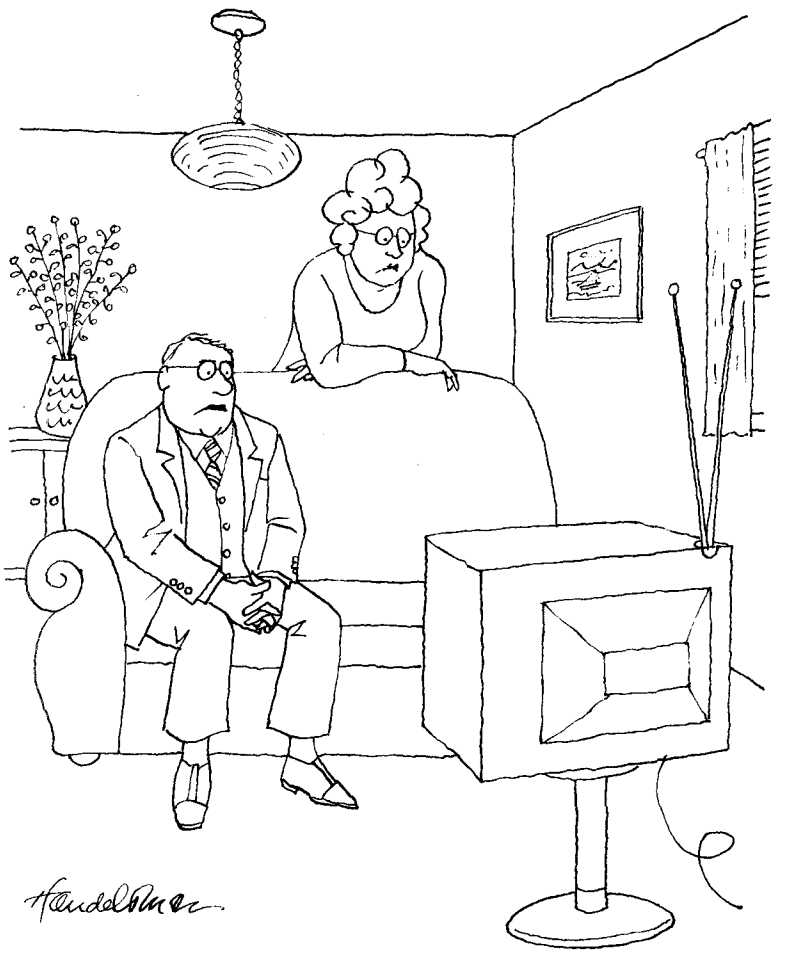
In the realm of law it seemed true that, as Commissioner Smith told the Otoes, "things last longer on paper than they do in your head." Indian societies appeared to lack law because they were traditional societies, without benefit of writing. As the Otoes and nearly every other North American tribe discovered, white officials considered tribal memory, the basis of tradition, to be erroneous and inconsistent. And yet Jefferson attributed a different evil to tradition. He was so purely a man of reason, and his cultural enemies in Europe and America were so clearly the slaves of tradition, that he writes of Indians as if they were Jacobites or Catholic priests. "What chains them to their present state of barbarism and wretchedness," he asked in 1818, "but a bigotted veneration for the supposed superlative wisdom of their fathers, and the preposterous idea that they are to look backward for better things, and not forward?" Thus it was possible for an Indian to be wild yet better governed than Europeans, unrestrained by civilization yet far too tightly bound by tradition. Jefferson's reasoning is echoed again and again in the following centuries.

In brief historical essays that introduce the voices in "Native American Testimony" Peter Nabokov points out some critical moments in the history of Indian-white relations. These are not battles or massacres, which Americans have been taught to consider the cardinal episodes of Indian-white history. They are paper events, which reflect the gradual extensions of law into the realms of unwritten wildness, and the clash between Jefferson's contempt for tradition and the Indians' veneration of it. In 1823, for example, the United States Supreme Court declared that "discovery gave exclusive title to those who made it," a decision that might have secured the Indians' lands for them, had discovery (and the inscribed law on which it rested) not been an exclusively European activity. Eight years later, in a case brought by the Cherokees, the Supreme Court gave that tribe what Nabokov calls "an unequivocal acknowledgment of their status as an independent sovereign nation." In 1871, the Indian Appropriation Act overturned that decision. It read, in part, "No Indian nation or tribe within the territory of the United States shall be . . . recognized as an independent nation, tribe, or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty." By that time, of course, the United States had obtained by treaty nearly everything it could have wanted anyway. What, then, was the legal status of Indians, who had been America's allies, enemies, wards, and children? The question was resolved only in 1924, and only in the most technical sense: they were granted United States citizenship.

"Native American Testimony" reminds the reader that history hasn't always happened in a hurry. It sometimes seems as if the whole of this nation's westward expansion—three centuries' worth—looked like those familiar photographs of the 1893 Oklahoma land rush: mules running neck and neck with thoroughbreds, dust washing back over heavily laden wagons, the unlimited West lying just outside the frame to the left. Yet at every step of that long continental conquest stood an Indian, with as much right and reason to be there as the white man. We're used to thinking that Indians opposed white expansion only by force. But again and again they parleyed with whites, and their words were recorded often enough to confirm Jefferson's opinion that Indian orators were the equal of Cicero or Demosthenes. And what is such an oratory for if not for deliberating the law?

Here, again, is Corn Tassel, who would have made a distinguished justice of the Supreme Court had such a position existed at the time:

> Were we to inquire by what law or authority you set up a claim, I answer, *none!* Your laws extend not into our country, nor ever did. You talk of the law of nature and the law of nations, and they are both against you. Indeed, much has been advanced on the want of what you term civilization among the Indians; and many proposals have



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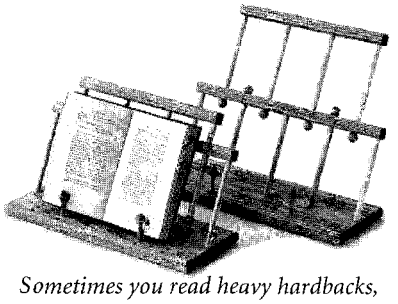

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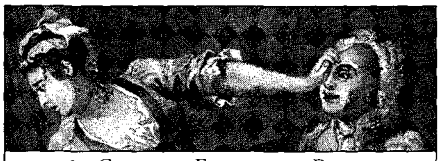

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been made to us to adopt your laws, your religion, your manners and your customs. But, we confess that we do not yet see the propriety, or practicability of such a reformation, and should be better pleased with beholding the good effect of these doctrines in your own practices than with hearing you talk about them, or reading your papers to us upon such subjects.

There is, admittedly, a sense of dislocation here which comes from hearing Corn Tassel's Cherokee words translated into good eighteenth-century English prose. But the sense of dislocation also arises from the force of Corn Tassel's argument. He is arguing not from mere passion but from conviction, and from reason. He is demanding consistency on the part of those who argue against him, which is what anyone who believes in the power of reason naturally demands. But he is also saying things we do not expect to hear Indians say. Americans are used to a kind of history in which, after being swindled by a treaty, the Indians retreat westward in silence, to go on the warpath or huddle on reservations. Silence is about all that descends from traditional societies once they've been broken, and we have, of course, built silence into our cultural stereotype of the stern, stoic Indian. Even now, when there is great interest in what Native Americans have to tell us, we expect only a kind of gnomic utterance from them, forgetting that to make someone a prophet is to allow him just one type of discourse.

But Corn Tassel concludes, "The great God of Nature has placed us in different situations. It is true that he has endowed you with many superior advantages; but he has not created us to be your slaves. *We are a separate people!*" Again and again in "Native American Testimony" the reader hears Indians trying vainly to prove to whites the separateness and the sufficiency of Indian culture—to establish, in other words, the premise behind an argument like Corn Tassel's. Indians are mystified by the obduracy of whites, and in their words you discern an uncanny portrait of their oppressors. "Certainly," says one Santee Sioux, "they are a heartless nation." But such sweeping phrases of condemnation, and they are few in number here, are not as damning as the *wonder* that Indians felt about whites. "We had everything to learn about the white man's road," Carl Sweezy, an Arapaho artist, wrote some fifty years ago. "We had to learn that clocks had something to do with the hours and minutes that the white people mentioned so often. Hours, minutes, and seconds were such small divisions of time that we had never thought of them."

A vision of punctiliousness—the administrative excellence of a heartless nation—is what sticks with you when you finish reading "Native American Testimony." The westward expansion of the United States was not a land rush, not a hellbent gallop, but the slow, steady progress of men carrying transits and survey chains, men making notations in ruled notebooks. Because so many of the tales Peter Nabokov gives us are now well worn, not all of them call up the immediacy of actual encounters between Indians and whites. But there is one that does—one in which you can see the postures struck, taste the disharmony in the air. The year is 1873, and this is again the meeting in Washington, D.C., between Commissioner Smith and the Otoes, the second day. Commissioner Smith has just reminded the Indians that things last longer on paper than they do in your head. Medicine Horse has just reminded the Commissioner that the Otoes are not children. "If this course I propose was injuring you I should not propose it," Commissioner Smith is saying. "But it is for your own good."

Medicine Horse: "Father, look at me and not at the table."

"I am busy writing," the Commissioner says. —VERLYN KLINKENBORG

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

DREAMING IN CUBAN, by Cristina Garcia (Knopf; $20). A restless first novel, which darts between Brooklyn and Havana and the coastal town of Santa Teresa del Mar, and hovers over each of the strong-willed women in the del Pino family. Celia, the stern and private family matriarch, is firmly wed to Castro's revolution, laboring in the cane fields and sitting up at night with a pair of binoculars to monitor the coast for suspicious movement. Her daughters are devoted to other cults: Felicia loses herself in Santería, with its black magic and animal sacrifices; Lourdes, abused by soldiers during the revolution, defiantly nourishes her American dream, a small, lucrative Brooklyn bakery. Last but not

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least is Lourdes' daughter, Pilar, who feeds on the cynical energy of punk rock like a true American teen-ager yet suspects that Cuba is her real home, and, to her mother's dismay, plots to return there. Ms. Garcia brings equal openness and curiosity to the passions of each of these women, and even grants them supernatural powers. Her characters operate at the height of their potential vividness, and their lives have the unlikely brilliance of a dream in Technicolor.

THE END OF THE NOVEL, by Michael Krüger, translated from the German by Ewald Osers (Braziller; $17.50). This is not, as the title suggests, a meditation on the death of literature but a sassy novella about one man's attempt to rid himself of one particular novel—a "history of imagination" that he's been working on for nine years. Camped out in a dilapidated lakeside cottage, he tries to kill off the annoyingly erudite hero of his book, but as he ponders the appropriate way to do it he begins to doubt the worth of his ambitious opus. He walks down to the local inn for dinner and picks up a waitress named Eva, and the book—the book *we* are reading—becomes a patchwork of sexual distractions, flashbacks to the narrator's past love troubles and writerly discoveries, funny forays into the world of the novel in question, and manic episodes of revision which affect both the narrator's manuscript and his overliterary way of thinking. The fact that this is a postmodern shaggy-dog story doesn't make it any less amusing or touching; Mr. Krüger's highly crafted style (evident despite some small bumps in the translation) is graced by an unforced, satisfying melancholy.

AT WEDDINGS AND WAKES, by Alice McDermott (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $19). Early in this novel you learn that the mother of the three children you are following around will separate from their cheerful and affectionate father, and that their aunt, May, who dotes on them will marry, and die four days later. These compelling harbingers pull you through activities detailed with sedulous specificity, among them the trips by way of two buses and a change of subways from the children's home in suburban Long Island to the New York apartment where their mother grew up, and where her three sisters and her stepmother still live. Through tiny hints and tiny pieces of dialogue, you learn to hate this stepmother, and to become fond of Aunt May. But of the telegraphed catastrophes you learn only that they occur. The story exists in inference and mood and patterned repetitions of facts and phrases. You feel cheated not to find it on the page.

NOTE: "Billie Dyer and Other Stories," by William Maxwell, has been published by Knopf ($18). Nearly all the stories originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

GENERAL

LETTERS OF GUSTAVE COURBET, edited, and translated from the French, by Petra ten-Doesschate Chu (Chicago; $55). A staggering scholarly achievement—a compilation of letters written over forty years, from a schoolboy's unhappy letter home, to one from the ailing painter to his father and sister only eight days before his death, in 1877, at the age of fifty-eight. This correspondence, fully annotated and placed in chronological order, will lead to sharp revision of the popular idea that Courbet was a man of great talent but a rather boorish, semiliterate provincial. Although he was a poor speller (possibly because of dyslexia), he had a supple command of descriptive and picturesque language, and his correspondents included men of letters like Théophile Gautier and Victor Hugo. We learn that Courbet's dislike of authority was lifelong, and stemmed from his democratic instincts. In return for his part in the Commune of 1871, he was forced into exile in Switzerland; still, in the letters of his last years he continued to fight back.

THE AMERICAN RELIGION: THE EMERGENCE OF THE POST-CHRISTIAN NATION, by Harold Bloom (Simon & Schuster; $22). The eminent literary scholar attempts to apply his critical skills to American religion. He sees our religious experience as having shed European doctrine, and argues that the new faiths created in this country during the nineteenth century are really forms of Gnosticism, not "normative" Christianity. But every Christian sect believes that its Christianity is normative,

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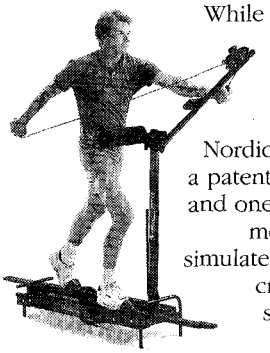

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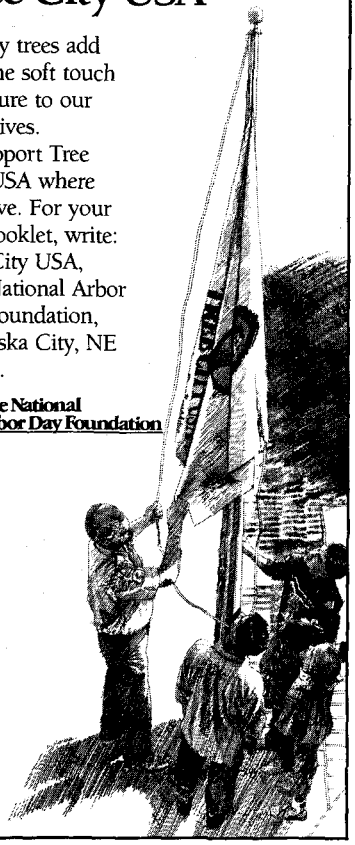

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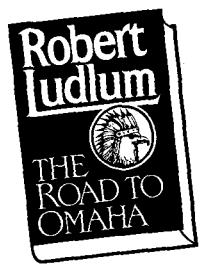

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and so his argument evaporates. Mr. Bloom isn't sympathetic to the Fundamentalist bloc of Southern Baptists, and there is no reason he should be, but he writes of their struggle for control of the denomination as if it were unparalleled, when church history records innumerable similar quarrels over authority. The failure here is one not of intellect but of sensibility: Mr. Bloom is tone-deaf to the spiritual needs that drive Americans to seek and accept new faiths, or to alter old ones. He clearly is trying to say something about American culture, and how it has separated from its European past, but the approach he has chosen demonstrates his limitations rather than his strengths.

FUGITIVE SPRING: A MEMOIR, by Deborah Digges (Knopf; $20). The author, an award-winning poet, was born in 1950 into a clamorous and loving "high Dutch" family of ten in Jefferson City, Missouri. With grace and just enough humor, she recalls cleaning the rat cages in her father's laboratory (he was a doctor who did cancer research), falling through the ice on the pond one January day (the sun, from under there, looked "like a dirty paper lantern over a weak bulb"), dropping out of college and then trying it again, and marrying young. Her husband was an Air Force pilot in training when she gave birth to their first son and began to write poetry. Ms. Digges does the reader the favor of simply remembering her early life, rather than combing it for proof that she was destined to become a poet or justifying the choices she made along the way. She speculates that she may have started writing partly in response to the confused politics of the sixties, and, indeed, her story is not just that of a wholesome, apple-picking girl but that of a boom baby who came of age in time to vote for McGovern.

NOTE: "A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique," by William Finnegan, has been published by the University of California ($25). Most of the contents first appeared here.

MYSTERY & CRIME

STRANGE LOYALTIES, by William McIlvanney (Morrow; $20). Jack Laidlaw, the Glasgow police detective who is Mr. McIlvanney's contribution to crime fiction, thinks of himself as "a policeman who read philosophy. I could understand both Albert Camus and Matt Mason"—an underworld figure. A friend sees him differently: "You're spending your life in a contagious diseases unit without inoculation." In the matter that occupies him here, his philosophy is not much help; it is his willingness to take risks that seems to pay off. Laidlaw's younger brother—a once promising painter, now an alcoholic estranged from his wife—is killed in a traffic accident, and Laidlaw feels compelled to seek an imponderable why. This compulsion almost incidentally leads him toward the resolution of two murderous hit-and-run accidents. But "Strange Loyalties" is far more than a crime novel; Laidlaw's search reveals to us as well as to himself something about the nature of guilt and survival.

A STAINED WHITE RADIANCE, by James Lee Burke (Hyperion; $19.95). The Atchafalaya basin, Mr. Burke tells us, "encompasses hundreds of square miles of bayous, canals, sandspits, willow islands, huge inland bays, and flooded woods where the mosquitoes will hover around your head." It is the home of Mr. Burke's Dave Robicheaux, a Cajun detective with the Iberia Parish sheriff's office, and the scene of his new examination of its elaborate, if homespun, criminalities. The principal players are the Sonnier family: oil-rich Weldon, television-evangelist Lyle, demagogue Bobby Earl, and the abusive father, who, long absent, seems to have returned to continue his sadistic ways. The story opens and ends with murder, and it is both a fine entertainment and a rich depiction of a people and a place.

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[*Guy Gugliotta in the Washington Post*]

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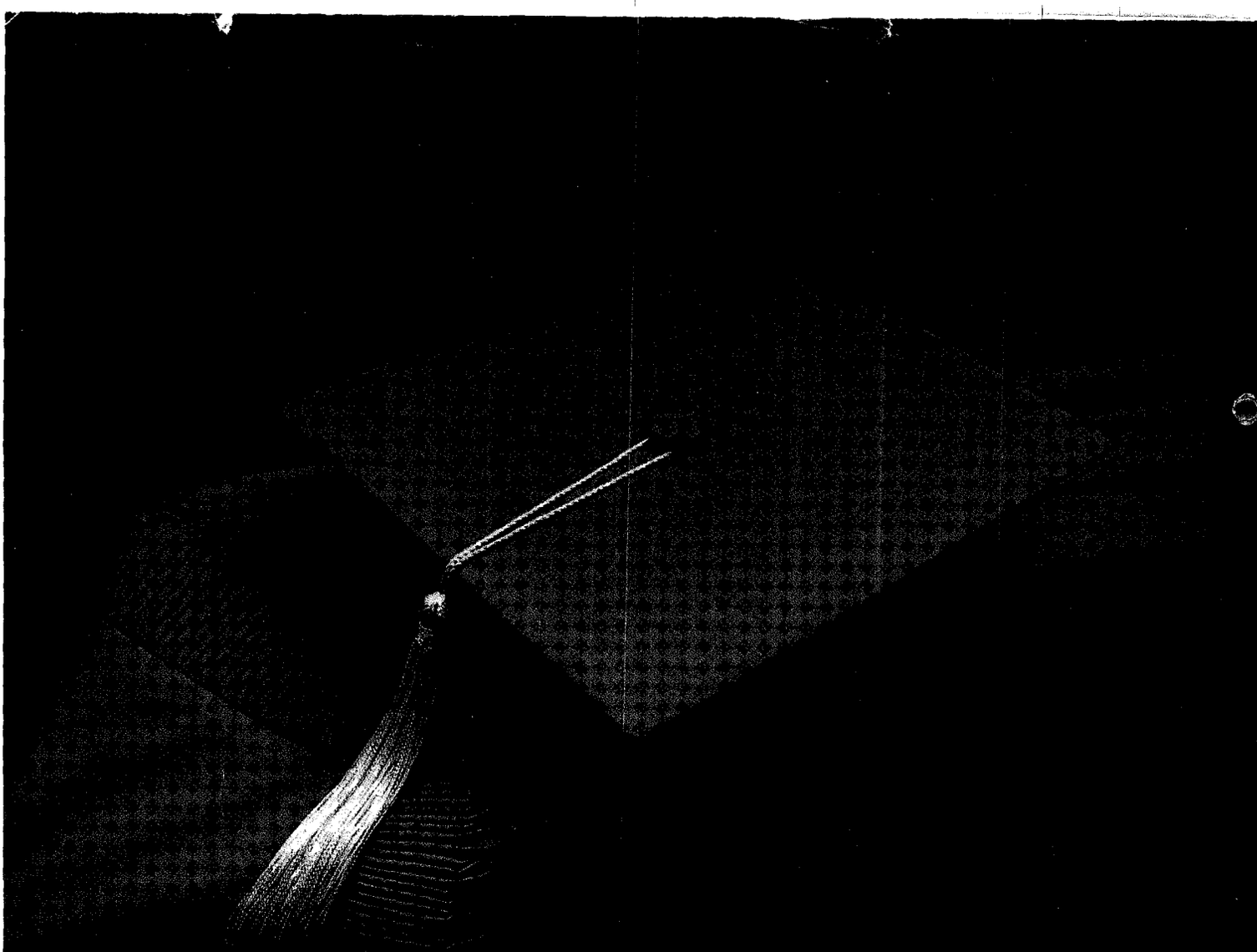

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